

The Catholic Faith

A summary Statement based on The Australian Catechism

By Rev. Peter J. Elliott

Australian Catholic Truth Society No.1657 (1977)

1. GOD: THE CREATOR: MAN'S DESTINY

God made everything. He created everything; that is, He made it out of nothing. God is the Creator of the world, and the moon, the planets and the stars. He is the living Being without beginning and without end. He is infinitely great and infinitely good.

There is only one God. He is in heaven, on earth, and everywhere, but we do not see God because He is a Spirit, having no body. Therefore, God cannot be seen by us in this life.

God sees us and always watches over us, because He loves us. God can do all things. God made the world to show His love, His power and wisdom, and to help us to reach our home in heaven.

With the help of my parents, God made me, giving me a body and a soul. God created my soul, and He made me like Himself. I am like God because - I have a spirit. I will never die; I can know and love God.

God made me to know Him, love Him and serve Him here on earth and to be happy with Him forever in heaven.

2. PRINCIPAL TRUTHS OF CHRISTIAN REVELATION

We can know God on earth by seeing the wonderful things He has made and by learning the truths which He has taught. We know what God has taught from the teachings of His Church, which is "the pillar and defense of the truth." (1 Timothy 3: 15).

We can understand many of the truths which God has revealed, but there are some truths which we cannot fully understand. These are called Mysteries of Religion. The chief Mysteries of Religion are the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation.

The Holy Trinity

The Mystery of the Holy Trinity means that in one God there are three really distinct Persons, equal in all things, and having only one and the same Divine Nature. The First Person is God the Father, the Second Person is God the Son, the Third Person, is God the Holy Spirit.

The Incarnation and its Purpose

The Mystery of the Incarnation means that God the Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became Man.

The word "Incarnation" means "coming into flesh", because God the Son became Man by taking, through the power of the Holy Spirit, a body and a soul like ours in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

God the Son became Man to save us.

God the Son saved us when He completed his perfect life by His sufferings and death on the cross and by His glorious Resurrection.

3. MAN'S ORIGIN, THE FALL, THE ANGELS

We needed to be saved because our first parents, Adam and Eve, who had been created to enjoy God's kingdom of heaven, had sinned against God and by their sin had closed heaven against all mankind. In the story of our first parents, the name "Adam" means "man", the name "Eve" means "woman". (Genesis 1-3).

We read that our first parents disobeyed God when he tested their obedience to Him, their Lord and Master. In this way, the story teaches us the truth that God has created man with free-will.

By saying that "God has created man with free-will", we mean that God has given to each of us the power to obey, Him or to disobey him, not forcing us to be good. God made our, first parents free, but the devil tempted them because he wanted them to disobey God.

The devil is one of the fallen angels.

The Angels

The angels are spirits like our souls, but they have no bodies. Like man and woman, they were made free to choose so that they could win or lose heaven. God loved them too much to force them to be good. But the angels were so great and beautiful that some fell into the sin of pride. They rebelled against God, and are punished in hell forever. These fallen angels are called devils or demons.

God rewarded the good angels by allowing them to see and serve Him in heaven, thus making them happy forever. Each of us has a guardian angel to help us to serve God.

After the Fall of Man

By their sin of rebellion and disobedience, our first parents lost the wonderful gift of sanctifying Grace (see No. 11) and with it the right to heaven. In the story of Adam and Eve, we read that they were driven out of the Garden of Eden, and with all their children to the end of the world were doomed to die. In this way, the story teaches us the truth that the sin of our first parents comes down to each of us. We are born in Original Sin. By saying that "we are born in Original Sin" we mean that because of the sin of our first parents - we are born without sanctifying Grace, and without a right to heaven; we have an inclination to do wrong (sins); we must suffer the pains and miseries of this life.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, and she alone, was conceived and born free from Original Sin. This favour from God is called her Immaculate Conception. God gave her this favour because she would be his Mother when He became one of us.

4. CHRIST AND HIS WORK FOR US

God the Son became one of us to rescue us from sin and to take us to be with Him in heaven. God the Son, when He became Man, was called Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is true God and true Man. Jesus Christ is truly God because He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, and therefore He has one and the same Nature with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ is truly Man because, while truly God, He has a complete human nature, that is a body and a soul exactly like ours in all things, except sin.

But there is only one Person in Jesus Christ, and that, person is the Second Divine Person of the Holy Trinity. There are two natures in Jesus Christ, a divine nature and a human nature. He is the God-Man.

The Life of Jesus Christ

On the day of the Annunciation, the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary, "...behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus." (Luke 1:31).

On Christmas Day, Jesus Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary in a stable at Bethlehem. When Jesus grew up, he left home and went around teaching men about his Father. He gathered around him a group of followers to whom he gave special teaching and a share in his power and authority. He performed miracles to show that he was God. His miracles show us the power, love and care of God.

On Good Friday Jesus Christ died, nailed to a cross, to redeem and save. We call that day "good" on which Jesus died because his death has shown how much he loves us, and has brought us so many benefits. While the body of Jesus was in the tomb, his soul went to the souls of all good people who died before Christ; waiting until he would save them and take them to heaven.

On Easter Sunday, the third day after his death, Jesus Christ arose, body and soul, glorious and immortal, from the dead, raising us by his Resurrection to that sharing in the divine life which is the life of Grace. The death of Jesus proves that he is Man, and his Resurrection proves that He is God.

On Ascension Thursday, forty days after Easter, Jesus Christ passed body and soul into heaven. He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. (See No. 17).

5. CHRIST'S CHURCH

On Pentecost Sunday, the Holy Spirit came down upon the followers of Jesus, his apostles, in the form of flames of fire. Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen and enlighten his apostles, and to give life to the Church, guiding and guarding it through all ages.

Jesus Christ came on earth not only to die for us, but also to teach us what we must believe and do to save our souls. To save our souls, we must believe in Jesus Christ and all his teaching, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him". (Hebrews 11: 6). In faith, we must do good, "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead." (James 2: 26).

Jesus Christ founded a visible Society, the Church, which is his own People, to give us his teaching and to guide and help us on the way to heaven. We must believe the teaching of the Church, because the Church has authority from Jesus Christ to teach. Jesus said to his apostles, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Church cannot make a mistake in teaching, for Jesus promised the Pastors of his Church that he would send the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to teach them all truth and to remain with them forever. "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever." (John 14:16). "When the Spirit of Truth comes he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak of his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." (John 16: 13).

Jesus Christ promised that his Church would last for all time. He said, "and I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18).

The true Church founded by Jesus Christ is the Holy Catholic Church. The true Church founded by Jesus Christ is found in the People who are governed by the Pope, and the Bishops in union with him.

6. THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH

Christ's words and our own reason tell us that there are four chief marks or signs by which the true Church can be known. The true Church is (1) One, (2) Holy, (3) Catholic, that is, universal, and (4) Apostolic. The Catholic Church alone is one, holy, universal and apostolic, and is therefore the one true Church of Jesus Christ.

(1) One: The Catholic Church is one because all God's people believe the same truths, offer to God the same Holy Sacrifice, share the same Sacraments and are united under one visible head on earth, the Pope.

(2) Holy: The Catholic Church is holy because it was founded by Jesus Christ and through its holy teaching and the Sacraments it gives us all the graces that in every age make men and women remarkable for holiness. Such people are the saints.

(3) Universal ("Catholic"): The Catholic Church is universal because its Founder, Jesus Christ, sent it to teach all nations. Everywhere and in every age, it teaches everything that Jesus taught. Men of all races belong to God's People and anyone can join the Church.

(4) Apostolic: The Catholic Church is apostolic because she holds the truths taught by the apostles and because the Bishops of the Catholic Church can trace back their authority in an unbroken line to Jesus Christ and the Apostles.

Necessity

Everyone is bound to belong to the Catholic Church because Our Lord said to his Apostles, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16).

Those who deliberately and through their own fault are outside the Catholic Church cannot be saved. However, those who through no fault of their own are outside the Catholic Church will be saved if they die in the state of grace, that is, following their consciences and trying to be good.

7. WE ARE THE CHURCH

The members of the Church are our Holy Father the Pope, and with him all the Bishops, priests and people who are baptised, and who recognise the Pope to be the Vicar (deputy) of Christ on earth and the visible head of God's People.

The Pope is the successor of St. Peter, who was chief of the Apostles, Christ's Vicar on earth, and first Pope and Bishop of Rome.

We know St. Peter was made the visible head of the Church because Jesus said to him, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:18, 19).

After the Resurrection, Jesus Christ appointed St. Peter shepherd over his whole flock, when he said, "Feed my lambs ...feed my sheep." (John 21:15-17).

The successors of the other Apostles are all the other Bishops of the Catholic Church. Together with the Pope, they make up one apostolic "college" (united group) to teach, govern and lead God's People.

By the infallibility of the Pope, we mean that the Pope cannot teach what is false when, speaking as Head of the Church, and binding all the faithful, he defines doctrines of faith and morals.

Doctrines of faith and morals are revealed in the Bible and in Tradition. Together, the Bible with Tradition make up God's Revelation to us.

The Bible and Tradition

By the Bible, we mean the Books of the New Testament and of the Old Testament which, as they were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have God for their Author. We should read the Bible because the Church put it together as her own library of holy books.

However, the Bible does not contain all the truths given to us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Some of these truths are contained in Tradition. St. Paul says, "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter". (2 Thessalonians 2: 15).

By "Tradition" we mean those teachings of Christ which were not written in the books of the Bible, but have come down to us through the Apostles and their successors within the Catholic Church.

8. SIN, CONTRITION, PURGATORY

Members of the Church, like all men, can still do wrong. Sin is any wilful thought, word, deed, or failure to do something. Sin goes against the love and law of God.

Mortal Sin

When we break God's law in a serious way, this is mortal sin. A person commits a mortal sin when he knowingly and willingly consents to do something which he believes to be a mortal sin.

By mortal sin my soul rebels against God. I lose sanctifying Grace and all right to heaven. To commit a mortal sin is the greatest of all evils.

If I commit a mortal sin, I should at once make an act of perfect contrition, and then go to Confession as soon as I reasonably can.

Perfect Contrition is sorrow for our sins because they offend God, Who is so good Himself and deserves to be loved so much by us. (See prayers, p. 28). Perfect Contrition immediately takes away sin by giving sanctifying Grace (see No. 12), and restores us to God's friendship even before we go to Confession.

But when we go to Confession, we are bound to tell all the mortal sins which have not been already confessed and forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance, (see No. 14). Then we are sure of God's forgiveness. Those who die in mortal sin are lost in hell forever.

Venial Sin

When we break God's law in a less serious way than mortal sin, this is venial sin.

A person commits a venial sin when he knowingly and willingly consents to something which he believes to be a venial sin. By venial sin our love for God is lessened, and so we are in greater danger of falling into mortal sin.

Purgatory

Those who die in venial sin go to Purgatory. Purgatory is a state of purification in the next life where some souls have to wait because they are not yet fit to go to heaven.

Those who die in venial sin, and those who have not done sufficient penance for sin forgiven, are sent to Purgatory, but they will pass on to heaven because God is preparing them to be with Him forever.

We can help the souls in Purgatory by our prayers and good works, by gaining indulgences for them (see No. 14), and especially by the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins." (2 Maccabees 12: 46).

By the Communion of Saints, we mean that the members of the Church on earth, the saints in heaven, and the souls in Purgatory are all united as one family of God. We can all help one another in this great family of God.

9. THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

We are bound not only to believe what God has taught, but also to love and serve Him, ". . . faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." (James 2:17). We love and serve God by keeping the Commandments of God and the Commandments of His Church.

The Ten Commandments

God revealed the Ten Commandments when He said, "I am the Lord your God, 1. You shall not have strange gods before Me. 2. You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain. 3. Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath day. 4. Honour your father and your mother. 5. You shall not kill. 6. You shall not commit adultery. 7. You shall not steal. 8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. 9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife. 10. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods."

I - "You shall not have strange gods before Me"

We are commanded by the first Commandment to give supreme worship and adoration to God and to Him alone.

We give supreme worship and adoration to God by the offering of Sacrifice, by prayer, and by acts of Faith, Hope and Love.

We make an act of Faith to show that we firmly believe in God and the truths that He has taught.

We show our Faith by learning our religion carefully, by practicing it faithfully, and by teaching it to others.

We make an act of Hope to show that we desire eternal life, and the means to obtain eternal life with God. We make an act of Love to show that we love God above all for His own sake, and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God. (See prayers, p. 28.)

We sin against the first Commandment by taking part in any form of false religion or superstitious practices.

It is lawful and good to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, but not to give them divine or supreme honour, which is due to God alone.

II - "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain"

We are commanded by the second Commandment to speak with reverence of God, and of holy persons and things.

We sin against the second Commandment by blaspheming or cursing or by taking oaths that are false, unjust or unnecessary.

III - "Remember that you keep holy the Sabbath day"

We are commanded by the third Commandment to give special worship to God, at appointed times. We sin against the third Commandment by wilfully failing to keep Sunday and Holy Days as the Church teaches.

The Church commands us to offer Sacrifice to God on Sundays and certain Holy Days by sharing in the celebration of Mass. The Church forbids us to engage unnecessarily in bodily work on these days.

IV - "Honour your father and your mother"

We are commanded by the fourth Commandment to love and honour our parents and superiors, and to obey them in all that is not sinful.

We sin against the fourth Commandment by all contempt, ill will or disobedience towards our parents or to others placed over us to act for our parents.

Under the fourth Commandment, the chief duties of parents are to provide for their children, to instruct them in Christian doctrine, to send them to Catholic schools, if possible, and by love, care and good example and every means in their power, to bring them to God.

V - "You shall not kill"

We are commanded by the fifth Commandment to take proper care of our own life and health, and to live in peace and love with our neighbour. Who is my neighbour? All men are my neighbours.

We sin against the fifth Commandment by murder, or by drunkenness, quarrelling, hatred or revenge.

It is murder deliberately to kill an unborn child, or any helpless, old or gravely sick person.

VI - "You shall not commit adultery"

We are commanded by the sixth Commandment to be pure in what we think, say and do. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5: 8).

We sin against the sixth Commandment by deliberately agreeing to impure thoughts, words or actions, alone or with others.

VII - "You shall not steal"

We are commanded by the seventh Commandment to be just in our dealings with our neighbour, to pay just wages, and to do honest work.

We sin against the seventh Commandment by unjustly taking or keeping what belongs to others, or by cheating, or by injuring any person's property.

VIII - "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour"

We are commanded by the eighth Commandment to speak with truth and charity, for Our Lord has said: "And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them." (Luke 6: 31).

We sin against the eighth Commandment by giving false information under oath, by lies and unfair judgment, or by speaking unkindly or unjustly of our neighbour.

IX - "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife"

We are commanded by the ninth Commandment to keep ourselves pure in thought and desire.

We sin against the ninth Commandment by taking wilful pleasure in evil thoughts, desires or feelings, but bad thoughts, desires or feelings are not sins unless we knowingly and willingly consent to them.

X - "You shall not covet your neighbour's goods"

We are commanded by the tenth Commandment to be grateful for God's good gifts to us, and to rejoice in our neighbour's welfare.

We sin against the tenth Commandment by desiring to take or keep wrongfully what belongs to another person.

A New Law of Love

All ten Commandments are included in these words, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself." (Luke 10:27).

Our Lord goes further. We must love even our enemies. "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you". (Luke 6: 27).

God gives us his own help, Grace, so that we can not only follow his Commandments but enjoy following them. We may sum up God's Commandments in Christ's new law of love. when he said, "Love one another as I have loved you". (John 15: 12).

10. THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

We are bound to obey all the commandments of the Church because the Church gets power to make commandments directly from Jesus Christ. He said "He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects Him who sent me". (Luke 10:16).

The principal commandments of the Church are: * To worship at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and not engage unnecessarily in bodily work. * To fast and abstain from meat on the days commanded. * To confess our sins at least once a year. * To receive worthily the Blessed Eucharist each year at Easter or within the appointed time. * To contribute to the support of our pastors, and to the upkeep of Catholic schools and charitable institutions. * To send children to Catholic schools, but, if this is not possible, to see that Catholic children are taught the Catholic Faith. * To observe the laws of the Church regarding the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage.

The Holy Days of Obligation in Australia are: Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Ascension Thursday, the Assumption (August 15) and All Saints' Day (November 1st).

Fast days are days on which the Church limits the amount of food a person may eat.

Days of abstinence are days on which the Church forbids the use of meat. All Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence. There are two days on which the Church both limits the amount of food a person may eat, and forbids the use of meat - Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

The Church commands us to fast and abstain because fasting and abstinence help us to practice self control and so resist temptation. They can also be offered to God in reparation for our sins.

God gives us his own help, Grace, so that we can not only follow the Commandments of the Church but enjoy following them.

We need Grace to keep God's Commandments and those of His Church.

11. GRACE AND PRAYER

Grace is the supernatural Gift which God gives us to raise us into his Life, to make us holy and to help us to save our souls. The word "Grace" means "Gift".

Without Grace we can do nothing to merit heaven. Speaking of our union with him, Our Lord said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15: 5).

We receive the Grace of God in two ways, as Sanctifying Grace and as Actual Grace.

Sanctifying Grace makes us share in the divine life of Christ so that we become the temples of the Holy Spirit, the adopted children of God and heirs to his heavenly Kingdom.

Sanctifying Grace is increased by prayer and good works, and especially by offering the Holy Mass, and receiving the Sacraments.

By an increase of Sanctifying Grace our souls become more beautiful and more pleasing to God, and by it we gain the right to greater happiness in heaven. Sanctifying Grace is lost by mortal sin, and restored by repentance.

Actual Grace helps us to know and to do what is right, especially at a particular time. We may receive the help of Actual Grace when we pray for guidance and strength in a problem.

Prayer

Prayer is thinking about God, speaking to him, desiring to Love him, and asking him to give us what we need for soul and body. We should pray because God created us and he is our loving Father. On him we depend in all things. Christ himself says that we "ought always to pray and not lose heart". (Luke 18 :1).

We can always pray by offering to God all our thoughts, words and actions - every morning and every night, and frequently during the day. (See prayers p. 28). Our prayers are pleasing to God when we trust in his goodness, when we are ready to accept his will, and when we humbly pray in the name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is living within us helping us to pray.

We should ask the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, because they are God's friends, and are united with us through the Communion of Saints.

The Church teaches us to pray frequently to the Blessed Virgin Mary because she is the Mother of God, and therefore has special power in heaven.

12. THE SACRAMENTS

A Sacrament is an external human action chosen by Christ to give us Grace. All the Sacraments give us Sanctifying Grace, and in addition each Sacrament gives a right to special Actual Graces.

Christ gave his Church seven Sacraments: 1, Baptism; 2, Confirmation; 3, Blessed Eucharist; 4, Penance; 5, Anointing of the Sick; 6, Holy Order; 7, Marriage.

Three of these Sacraments give a spiritual mark or seal to the soul which cannot be effaced, and so they cannot be repeated - Baptism; Confirmation and Holy Order.

BAPTISM

The Sacrament of Baptism cleanses us from original sin by giving us Sanctifying Grace. So we become the children of God, and members of Christ's Mystical Body, God's People, the Church.

The Church is called the "Mystical Body of Christ" because all of God's People through Baptism are joined together in one Body with Christ as Head, and all share His Life by Sanctifying Grace.

Baptism is given by pouring water on the head of the person to be baptised, saying while pouring the water: "I baptise you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

We cannot go to heaven without Baptism. Jesus Christ said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3: 5).

However, either martyrdom for the Faith or an act of perfect love of God can take the place of Baptism of water. A martyr is a person who dies for his faith in Jesus Christ. All infants who die without Baptism go to be happy with God for ever.

CONFIRMATION

The Sacrament of Confirmation gives us the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in their fullness, and courage and strength to live always as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Together with Baptism and the Eucharist, this sacrament completes our initiation as Christians.

We show ourselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ by always being ready to fight and to suffer for our Faith, even if necessary giving our lives for it. Jesus Christ promised, "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 10: 32).

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit which we receive are: 1, Wisdom; 2, Understanding; 3, Counsel (good advice); 4, Knowledge; 5, Fortitude (being strong); 6, Piety (devotion to God); 7, the Fear of the Lord (a loving and deep reverence for God).

The Sacrament of Confirmation is given by the Bishop or his representative. He anoints the forehead of the person to be confirmed with Sacred Chrism (the most important Holy Oil) and says "(Name) be sealed with the Holy Spirit, the Gift of the Father."

13. THE BLESSED EUCHARIST: SACRIFICE AND SACRAMENT

The Blessed Eucharist is the Sacrifice of the New Law, and its greatest Sacrament, for in the Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine. Our Lord Jesus Christ is present, is offered, and is received.

At the Last Supper, the night before he was crucified, Jesus Christ took bread and blessed, and broke, and gave to his Apostles, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body," and he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." And he added, "Do this in memory of me." 1 (Matthew 26: 26-28).

When our Lord spoke the words of consecration, "This is my Body," "This is my Blood", the substance of the bread and wine was changed into his own Body and Blood, and only the appearances of bread and wine remained.

By the words, "Do this in memory of me," Our Lord 1. Ordained his Apostles bishops; 2. Gave them power to ordain other bishops and priests; and 3. Commanded all priests in the same way and with the same words to consecrate, offer and give his Body and Blood.

A priest is one, who through the Sacrament of Holy Order has received special powers to carry on the work of Jesus Christ, and in particular to offer the Holy Sacrifice to God, with and for God's People.

The Eucharist, The Sacrifice

Sacrifice is the highest act of religion, in which a priest offers a victim to God, to acknowledge God's supreme dominion over us and our total dependence on Him, and to establish union with God for the benefit of man.

A priest offers Sacrifice in the Mass, when, acting in the Person of Jesus Christ, he uses the power of consecration and changes bread and wine into Our Lord's Body and Blood. The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ at the consecration, during the Eucharistic Prayer. By "Body" and "Blood", we mean that the whole Christ is present under either of the appearances of bread and wine.

The Mass is the true Sacrifice of the New Law for in it Our Lord Jesus Christ, through the priest, offers himself to God the Father for the living and the dead.

The Mass is the same Sacrifice as that of the Cross because in the Mass Our Lord himself is both Priest and Victim. Although he does not suffer or shed his blood again, he continues the one perfect Offering he made on the Cross.

We go to Mass to offer sacrifice to God, that is, to be united to Him. Those who without good reason neglect Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation commit a mortal sin.

Since the offering of Mass is the holiest act we can perform, it is good to go to Mass as often as we can.

When offering the Mass, we should unite our intentions with those of Our Lord: 1, to praise God; 2, to thank Him for His gifts; 3, to offer reparation for our sins, and 4, to ask Him for all we need in soul and body.

To assist at Mass, we join with the priest and God's People assembled in offering the Divine Victim to God the Father as though we were all present at the Sacrifice on Calvary. The most perfect way of sharing in this Holy Sacrifice, is to receive the Lord Jesus in Holy Communion.

The Eucharist, The Sacrament

The Blessed Eucharist is the greatest Sacrament as well as the Sacrifice of Christ and his Church. It is God's greatest gift to man, as well as man's greatest offering to God. In the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, we receive Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. In the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, the Giver of all good gifts becomes the Food of our soul. We depend on him for our life of Grace. We call the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist "Holy Communion" because it unites us to God in a real union. (See John 6: 32-553).

Before we receive Holy Communion we must be in a state of grace (with no mortal sin unconfessed), observe the fast, (one hour before Communion), and we should make acts of Faith, Hope and Charity.

Jesus Christ is present with us in the Tabernacle, where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved in our churches. We should visit him there.

14. PENANCE

The Sacrament of Penance forgives the sins we commit after Baptism, and restores us to the friendship of God. It also gives a special grace to avoid sin and resist temptation. Sins are forgiven by the power of God, which Jesus Christ has given to the priests of his Church.

Jesus Christ gave the priests of his Church the power of for giving sins when he said to his Apostles on Easter Sunday night: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20:22, 23).

The four parts of the Sacrament of Penance are: 1, Contrition; 2, Confession; 3, Absolution; 4, Satisfaction.

Contrition is a heartfelt sorrow for having offended God, with a firm resolution of sinning no more. It may be either Perfect Contrition or Imperfect Contrition. We should be sorry for our sins because they are an insult to God our Creator, who is infinitely loving, good and perfect and because the Son of God was tortured and crucified for our sins. This sorrow is called Perfect Contrition.

Other reasons for Contrition are the fear of hell, the loss of heaven and the wickedness of sin. This sorrow is called Imperfect Contrition. It is not as good as Perfect Contrition. A person who is in danger of death and who cannot go to Confession, should make an act of Perfect Contrition (see page 28).

Confession is the telling of our sins to the priest in order to have them forgiven by Jesus Christ. Before we go to Confession we should ask God for the Grace to make a good confession; then we

should carefully examine our conscience; we should make acts of Contrition and resolve sincerely to sin no more.

Those who deliberately conceal a mortal sin in Confession commit a grievous sin by telling a lie to the Holy Spirit. Their confession is bad and must be made all over again.

Absolution is the pardon given by the priest, as minister of God, in the Sacrament of Penance. He says, "I absolve you from your sins..." As he says these words to us, he represents Jesus Christ who truly forgives our sins.

Absolution is the most important moment in the Sacrament of Penance.

Satisfaction is reparation (paying back, repairing) to God for sin. When we perform the penance we receive in Confession, we make satisfaction. These acts help us to share in the infinite and perfect satisfaction offered by Our Lord for all sins.

Indulgences. The Church helps us in making reparation by granting indulgences.

An Indulgence is a remission through the power of the Church of the temporal punishment due to sin, after its guilt has been forgiven.

The Church has power to give Indulgences because Jesus promised: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19).

A Plenary Indulgence remits all the penance owing for sins. A Partial Indulgence remits part of the penance owing for sins. We gain Indulgences by saying the prayers or doing the works prescribed by the Church. We must be in a state of grace, and must carry out the conditions specially required, such as. Confession, Holy Communion, a visit to the church, or prayers for the Pope's intentions.

We cannot gain Indulgences without Faith, by which we pray that God will accept the devotion or action which the Church provides in place of penance for sins. We can pray that Indulgences we may gain may be given over to help the holy souls in Purgatory.

15. ANOINTING THE SICK: HOLY ORDER

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick gives grace and strength to the soul of the person who is ill. It also remits sin and may even restore bodily health if God so wills. Our Lord sent his apostles to anoint the sick (Mark 6 :13). The early Church valued this Sacrament (James 5 :14-15). Since Confession and Holy Communion usually accompany this healing Sacrament, we should receive it, if possible, before we are in extreme danger of death.

The Sacrament of Holy Order gives Bishops and Priests the power to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, to forgive sin in the Sacrament of Penance, and to preach and teach with the authority of the Church. There are three Orders: Bishop, Priest and Deacon.

The special work of a Bishop is to teach with authority, and to govern the portion of the Church under his charge (the diocese), and to give the Sacraments of Holy Order and Confirmation.

The special work of a Priest is first to preach and teach the Good News of Christ, and most importantly, to celebrate Mass and hear confessions. The Bishop sends the Priest to work in a particular place, and gives him permission to use the powers of the Sacrament of Holy Order.

The special work of a Deacon is to help the Bishop or a Priest, by preaching and teaching, by giving Holy Communion, by baptising and assisting at marriages. The Bishop sends the Deacon to work in a particular place, and gives him permission to use the powers of the Sacrament of Holy Order. The Sacrament also gives Bishops, Priests and Deacons, special Grace to carry out all their sacred duties.

16. MARRIAGE

The Sacrament of Marriage unites husband and wife in a holy and inseparable union. It gives them a special Grace to live happily together, to form a family and to bring up their children in true reverence and love of God.

The bond of Christian Marriage cannot be broken, except by the death of husband or wife. Our Lord taught, "So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, - let no man put asunder." (Matthew 19: 6).

Marriages of Catholics before a civil registrar may be valid in civil law, but they are not valid in the sight of God.

A mixed marriage or inter-Church marriage is one between a Catholic and a non-Catholic. The Church does not encourage mixed marriages, because they can be a danger to the faith of the Catholic person and especially of the children. However, the Church allows a mixed marriage for good reasons, but only under certain conditions.

The conditions required before permission is given for a mixed marriage are: 1. The Catholic party has to make a special declaration of his or her fidelity to the Catholic Faith and promise to do everything possible to have the children baptised and brought up in the Catholic Faith. 2. The non-Catholic party is to be fully informed of the obligations of the Catholic partner.

17. DEATH: JUDGEMENT: HELL: HEAVEN

Immediately after death, my soul has to face my Particular Judgement and the sentence then passed will be confirmed by Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Judge, on the Day of General Judgement.

By the "Day of General Judgement" we mean that last day when, Jesus Christ taught, "...the Son of man is to come, with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done." (Matthew 16:27). On the last day, Christ will come to judge us with great power and majesty, and all the angels with Him.

The Resurrection of the Body means that we shall all rise again on the last day with the same bodies that we had in this life, but our bodies will be glorified, made perfect and new, like the risen Lord Jesus.

Raised up, body and soul, the Blessed Virgin Mary already enjoys the glory of heaven. This favour from God is called her Assumption.

However, Jesus Christ will say to the wicked on the last day, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25: 41). The wicked will go, both body and soul, into the everlasting punishment of hell. This punishment of hell is the loss forever of God.

On the other hand, Jesus Christ will say to the good on the last day, "Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25: 34). Risen

and glorified, the good will enter, both body and soul, into the perfect happiness of heaven, where we shall be able to recognise and know one another.

Our reward in heaven will be the Blessed Vision of God. Then we shall see God's wondrous Glory, share His infinite Knowledge and Life, and together we will rejoice in His unchanging happiness for ever.

18. VIRTUES AND VICES

The theological Virtues are Faith, Hope and Charity (1 Cor. 13).

The cardinal Virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. (Wisdom, 8: 7).

The twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit are: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Faith, Modesty, Continency, Chastity (cf. Galatians, 5. 22).

The seven Spiritual Works of Mercy are:

- (1) to convert the sinner;
- (2) to instruct the ignorant;
- (3) to counsel the doubtful;
- (4) to comfort the sorrowful;
- (5) to bear wrongs patiently;
- (6) to forgive injuries;
- (7) to pray for the living and the dead.

The seven Corporal Works of Mercy are:

- (1) to feed the hungry;
- (2) to give drink to the thirsty;
- (3) to clothe the naked;
- (4) to shelter the homeless;
- (5) to visit the sick;
- (6) to visit the imprisoned;
- (7) to bury the dead.

The seven Capital (or source) Sins are: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth.

The four sins crying to heaven for vengeance are:

Wilful murder,
the Sin of Sodom,
Oppression of the Poor,
Defrauding labourers of their wages (Gen. 4; Gen. 18; Exod. 2; James 5).

The four Last Things to be ever remembered are: Death Judgement, Hell and Heaven.

PRAYERS

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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 them who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed: I believe in God, the Father Almighty. Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

The Short Act of Contrition: O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, because you are so good, and with your help, I will not sin again. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Morning Offering: O Jesus, through the most pure heart of Mary, I offer you the prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of your Divine Heart.

Confiteor: I confess to almighty God that I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do... (here you may call to mind your sins); and I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin. all the angels and saints, to pray for me to the Lord our God. May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen

Act of Faith:

My God, I believe in You and all that Your Church teaches, because You have said it, and Your word is true.

Act of Hope:

My God, I hope in You, for grace and for glory, because of Your promises, Your mercy and Your power.

Act of Charity:

My God, because You are so good, I love You with all my heart, and for Your sake, I love my neighbour as myself.

The Divine Praises: Blessed be God. Blessed be His holy Name. Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. Blessed be the Name of Jesus. Blessed be His most Sacred Heart. Blessed be His most Precious Blood. Blessed be Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the altar. Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy. Blessed be her holy and Immaculate Conception. Blessed be her glorious Assumption. Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother. Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse. Blessed be God in His Angels and in His Saints.

Prayers for the Dead:

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord.

R: And let perpetual light shine on them.

May they rest in peace. Amen.

Have mercy, Lord, on the soul of...
May he/she rest in peace. Amen.

PRAYERS TO OUR LADY

The Memorare Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary, that never was it known in any age that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession, was abandoned. Inspired by this confidence, we fly to your aid, O Virgin of virgins, our mother. To you we come, before you we stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mary, mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions but in your mercy hear and answer us. Amen.

The Hail Holy Queen Hail, Holy Queen mother of mercy! Hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show to us the fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Praying the Rosary: We meditate on the Mysteries of the Rosary, thinking about each event in the life of Jesus and Mary, as we say one Our Father on each large (or separate) bead, and ten Hail Marys on the beads gathered in tens (decades).

Joyful Mysteries:

- 1, The Annunciation by the angel to Mary;
- 2, the Visitation by Mary to her cousin Elizabeth;
- 3, the Birth of Jesus at Bethlehem;
- 4, the Presentation of the Baby Jesus in the Temple;
- 5, the loss and finding of the Boy Jesus - in the Temple.

Sorrowful Mysteries:

- 1, The Agony of Our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane;
- 2, Our Lord is whipped;
- 3, Our Lord is crowned with thorns;
- 4, Our Lord carries his Cross to Calvary;
- 5, Our Lord dies for us on the Cross.

Glorious Mysteries:

- 1, The Resurrection of Our Lord from the dead;
- 2, His Ascension into Heaven;
- 3, the Holy Spirit comes upon the Apostles to make the Church;
- 4, Mary is assumed body and soul into Heaven;
- 5, Mary is crowned Queen of Heaven.

At the end of each decade, it is customary to say, "O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, and save us from the fires of hell. Bring all souls to heaven, especially those who most need your mercy." We always complete a decade by saying, Glory be...

Arrow Prayers: (Aspirations)

Jesus!

My Lord, and My God! (Suitable at the elevation of the Host and Chalice at Mass).

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. (The "Jesus Prayer" repeated again and

again by Eastern Christians).

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

My Jesus mercy, Mary help.

My God and my all.

Come, Holy Spirit

Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.

Immaculate heart of Mary, pray for us.

All for you, O my Jesus, all for you. Mother most pure, pray for me.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, help me now and when I come to die.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.
