

## The Church

The Church is the People of God. It was founded by Jesus Christ.

Jesus chose twelve Apostles to head the Church. The successors of the Apostles are the Bishops in union with the Pope. Jesus chose the Apostle Peter to be the head of the Apostles. The successor to St. Peter, the first bishop of Rome is the Pope.

## Marks of the Church

The four essential characteristics of the Church of Christ are:

- 1) ONE- The Church calls all people to be one and always strive for unity. We are one in our basic beliefs and we receive the same sacraments.
- 2) HOLY- The sacraments help to share God's holiness, we continue to grow in holiness by following the example of Christ.
- 3) CATHOLIC- Universal, open to all people of whatever race or color, rich as well as poor.
- 4) APOSTOLIC- Christ founded His Church upon Apostles and that Church in every age is ruled by the successors of the Apostles (bishops) who teach the doctrine of the Apostles.

## The Bible

The Bible is the Inspired Word of God. It was written by a number of authors at different places for various purposes, and at different times. The purpose of the Bible is to teach faithfully and without error those religious truths necessary for our salvation.

The Bible is divided into two main parts:

- 1) The Old Testament (often referred to as Jewish Scriptures)
- 2) The New Testament (often referred to as Christian Scriptures)

## Sacraments

The sacraments are outward signs, created by Christ, to give grace. They are visible signs of invisible grace.

Sacraments of INITIATION are Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

- 1) Baptism welcomes a person into the Church. It cleanses us from original sin and makes us permanently related to God as His children.
- 2) Confirmation confers the seal of the Holy Spirit upon a baptized person. In Confirmation, we ask for the graces needed to live a mature Christian life and to deepen our faith.
- 3) The Eucharist has central place among the sacraments. It is truly the body and blood of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.

The Sacraments of HEALING are Penance and Anointing of the Sick.

- 4) Penance forgives sins committed after Baptism. The necessary elements of a good confession include: true sorrow for my sins (contrition), a sincere confession of sin, and resolution not to sin again. The priest absolves (forgives) us of our sins and gives us some act of penance to perform.
- 5) Anointing of the Sick asks God to heal the sick, lighten their sufferings, forgive their sins, and bring them to eternal salvation. It is received by the seriously ill, the infirm, and the aged.

The Sacraments of VOCATION are Matrimony and Holy Orders

- 6) In Matrimony, a baptized man and woman enter into a permanent, life-long relationship in which they share life, love, and Christian faith with one another, with their children and with God.
- 7) In Holy Orders, men are called to the permanent service of the Church. There are three orders, deacon, priest, and bishop. They govern the faith community, proclaim and teach the Gospel, and sanctify God's people by administering the sacraments.

## Sacramentals

Sacramentals are sacred signs. They remind us of the symbolic nature of all creation, and encourage prayer and attitudes of reverence. Examples of sacramentals are baptismal water, holy oils, blessed ashes, candles, palms, crucifixes, and medals.

## The Liturgical Year

The Liturgical Year begins on the first Sunday of Advent and ends with the Feast of Christ the King. Within this year cycle, the Church unfolds the whole mystery of Christ. The Liturgical Year is divided into five seasons. They are:

- 1) ADVENT (purple)- four weeks prior to Christmas in expectation for the coming of Christ
- 2) CHRISTMAS (white)- opens with the Feast of the Nativity and ends with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
- 3) ORDINARY TIME (green)- period from the end of Christmas to the beginning of Lent
- 4) LENT (purple)- penitential season begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday
- 5) EASTERTIDE (white)- from Easter to Pentecost Sunday
- 6) ORDINARY TIME (green)- period from after Pentecost to the beginning of Advent

## The Covenants (Old and New)

A covenant is a sacred bond between God and His people. In these covenants, God pledges Himself to love, guide, protect, and save His people; in return, God's people are to be faithful to Him. God has promised to always be faithful to His people with steadfast love. The Old Testament of the Bible relates to us the Old Covenant; the New Testament relates the New Covenant. Jesus is the demarcation of the Old and New Covenants; in other words, He fulfilled the Old and began the New.

## Holy Days of Obligation

Jan. 1 <sup>st</sup> -	Mary, Mother of God- Celebrates Mary
40 days after Easter-	Ascension of our Lord- Jesus' ascension to Heaven
Aug. 15 <sup>th</sup> -	Assumption of Mary- Mary's assumption into Heaven
Nov 1 <sup>st</sup> -	All Saints Day- Honoring all the saints
Dec 8 <sup>th</sup> -	Immaculate Conception- Mary was conceived and preserved free from all sin
Dec 25 <sup>th</sup> -	Christmas- The Incarnation, God becomes Man

## The Prophets

The Prophets were called by God for a special mission. This mission was to call people to be faithful to their Covenant with God.

## The Trinity

There is ONE GOD in THREE DIVINE PERSONS. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The Father, who is eternal, is the creator of all things

The Son is Jesus, begotten of the Father before all time. He became man for us and our salvation.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son before all time and guides and sanctifies our lives.

## The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are: Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, Awe and Wonder

## Jesus- Two Natures

Jesus Christ is truly divine. He is God's only begotten Son from before all time. Jesus is also truly human. He worked with human hands. He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart.

When we sin, we break our relationship with God. God sent His son, Jesus, to reestablish our friendship with God. Jesus came among us as man. Born of the Virgin Mary, He entered our life situation. This is a mystery of the Incarnation- God's becoming man in Jesus Christ. Jesus, fully human and fully divine, freely chose the plan which the Father had outlined for Him: a life of service and love. This life reached its climax in Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection as Savior of all people. This is the mystery of the Redemption.

## Mary

The ever Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God occupies a special place in the Church because God has blessed her in a special way. The special gifts bestowed on her by God include her vocation as Mother of God, her Immaculate Conception (preserved from original sin), her perpetual virginity, and her entry into Christ's resurrection by being assumed body and soul to heaven (the Assumption).

## Saints

The Saints are witnesses and examples to all Christians. Through the Church, we are in union (communion) with the Saints. We are inspired by their heroic example and ask, in prayer, for their intercession with God on our behalf.

## Precepts of the Church

- 1) You shall attend Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation and rest from servile labor.
- 2) You shall confess your sins at least once a year
- 3) You shall receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter Season.
- 4) You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church
- 5) You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church

## Morality

Christian morality defines a way of living a life worthy of a human being and of an adopted child of God. Each Christian must have a right conscience and follow it. Conscience is not a feeling, but a personal judgment that something is right or wrong because of the will and law of God. As Roman Catholic Christians, we must respond to the teaching authority of the Church. Some moral values are absolute and must never be disregarded. We are called to faithful observance of the great commandment of love of God and neighbor, the Ten Commandments, the laws of the Church, and just civil laws. The principle of morality is love of God and love of neighbor.

## The Ten Commandments

- 1) I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods before me.
- 2) You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
- 3) Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day.
- 4) Honor your father and 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 neighbor.
- 9) You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
- 10) You shall not covet your neighbor's property

## The Greatest Commandment

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments the whole law is based, and the prophets as well."

## Grace and Sin

Grace is the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to His call to become His adoptive children through Grace, God shares His life with us, and the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit take up residence in our souls. This generous, free, and undeserved gift comes to us in baptism and grows through our reception of the sacraments. Grace always remains unless a mortal sin is committed, then it is lost. Grace can only be regained through the Sacrament of Penance.

Sin prevents people from living in God's grace.

Original Sin was committed by Adam and Eve. Human beings were created by God in the state of holiness but abused their liberty. They set themselves against God and sought fulfillment apart from Him. Every human being since that time, except Mary, has been born with original sin.

Personal or Actual Sin is committed by the individual. It is willful rejection of one's role as a child of God and a member of His people. We sin by commission (doing wrong) or by omission (not doing what one is morally obliged to do).

A grave offense, mortal sin, cuts off the sinner's relationship with God. A sin is mortal when these three things are present: 1) the sin must be serious; 2) the person must know it is serious and 3) the person must freely commit the sin.

Venial sin is a less serious offense against God or neighbor. It is not a turning away from God, but a weakening of the relationship between oneself and God.

## Capital Sins

The seven Capital Sins (moral faults) are:

Pride- unreasonable self-love

Greed- unreasonable attachment and desire for material things to the extent of neglect of spiritual goods

Lust- disordered desire for sexual pleasure

Anger- displeasure arising for some kind of offense suffered at the hands of another person

Gluttony- an unreasonable appetite for food and drink

Envy- sadness over another's good fortune because it is considered a loss to oneself, jealousy

Sloth- distaste and disgust for spiritual things; spiritual boredom; laziness



## Virtues

The three Theological Virtues are:

- 1) Faith- belief in God
- 2) Hope- trust or confidence in Divine Assistance
- 3) Charity- love of God and neighbor

The Four principle Moral (or Cardinal) Virtues are:

- 1) Prudence- practical wisdom and judgment to do good
- 2) Justice- giving to others what is due to them as a matter of right
- 3) Temperance- self- control
- 4) Fortitude- courage to face dangers or hardships for the sake of good

## Beatitudes

- 1) Blest are the poor in spirit; the reign of God is theirs
- 2) Blest are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled
- 3) Blest are the lowly; they shall inherit the land.
- 4) Blest are they who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall have their fill
- 5) Blest are they who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs
- 6) Blest are the single-hearted; for they shall see God
- 7) Blest are the peacemakers; they shall be called the sons of God
- 8) Blest are those persecuted for holiness's sake; the reign of God is theirs

## Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the Hungry  
Give Drink to the Thirsty  
Shelter the Homeless  
Bury the Dead  
Clothe the Naked  
Visit the Sick  
Visit those in Prison

## Spiritual Works of Mercy

Warn the Sinner  
Instruct the Ignorant  
Counsel the Doubtful  
Comfort the Sorrowing  
Bear Wrongs Patiently  
Pray for the Living and the Dead  
Forgive all Injury

## The Last Things

Death- we all die. After we die, there are two judgments

- 1) General Judgment- at the end of time, Christ comes to judge all mankind
- 2) Particular Judgment- when we die, each of us is judged by our lives and one of three verdicts is rendered
  - A) Heaven – the souls of those who have not committed any sin after baptism, and the souls of those who have committed sin, but have been cleansed here on earth, go immediately to heaven for eternity
  - B) Purgatory- those who die in the state of grace before they have done sufficient penance for their sins, are purified after death in purgatorial or cleansing punishments
  - C) Hell- if anyone dies unrepentant in the state of mortal sin, he will be tormented forever in hell