

How important is personal prayer?

Being a Catholic is more than just following a set of rules, saying certain prayers and attending Mass on Sundays. It calls for friendship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, fostered by prayer.

(CCCC) 535. **Why is there a universal call to prayer?** *Because, through creation, God first calls every being from nothingness...*

The Mass is the most excellent prayer because it makes present the sacrifice of Calvary. The Our Father is a unique vocal prayer because Jesus Christ taught it to us himself.



Everyone needs to make time each day for intimate conversation with God.

One can nourish prayer and knowledge of the faith with retreats, prayer groups, and reading spiritual books, in particular the New Testament.

The Rosary is a traditional way of honouring Mary and meditating on events in Jesus' life. Saying the family Rosary is a practice the Church recommends.

What about suffering?

"Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life..."

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1500.

While medical science does everything possible to relieve pain and affect a cure, the sufferer can unite his suffering to Jesus' suffering on the cross, for the salvation of others and of himself.

"Very often illness provokes a search for God, and a return to him." (CCC) 1501

What is the vocation of lay people?

The vocation of lay people is to sanctify themselves and others in and through their ordinary activities, including cultural and leisure pursuits.

(CCCC) 188. *The lay faithful have as their own vocation to seek the Kingdom of God by illuminating and ordering temporal affairs according to the plan of God...*

How important is daily work?

The *Compendium* (CCCC) at paragraph 513 says that, by working with commitment and competence, people fulfill the potential inscribed in human nature, honour the Creator's gifts, and serve the human community. "Work" includes paid employment, work within the family, volunteer activities, and study.

Where can I find a fuller explanation?

– *The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCCC)* is a 198-page book that explains the major beliefs of Catholics. http://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html

– *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* is the 825-page source for the Compendium. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

– *The official Vatican website* provides all major documents of the Catholic Church, including the Code of Canon Law. www.vatican.va

– *The website of the Archdiocese of Vancouver* is www.rcav.org



What is the difference between the Catholic Church and others?

The Church of Christ, which subsists fully in the Catholic Church, was founded by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It contains the full truth about God.

In 2000, Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, now Benedict XVI, wrote: "Only the revelation of Jesus Christ, therefore, introduces into our history a universal and ultimate truth..." (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration "Dominus Iesus")

Ample historical evidence shows that Jesus lived, died and rose from the dead about 2,000 years ago. God entered history. Jesus was who he claimed to be: God made Man — God and man in one person. It makes sense to belong to the Church he founded.

This bulletin describes what Catholics believe, how they are to live, where they get inner strength, and how they form a friendship with God.



Catholic Q & A

An information bulletin on doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church

Where does it say what Catholics believe?

The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are two basic summaries of Catholic faith. Each of 12 phrases in the Creeds represents an important doctrine. The Apostles' Creed reads:

1. I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
2. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
3. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
4. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
5. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.
6. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
7. He will come again 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 the life everlasting. Amen.

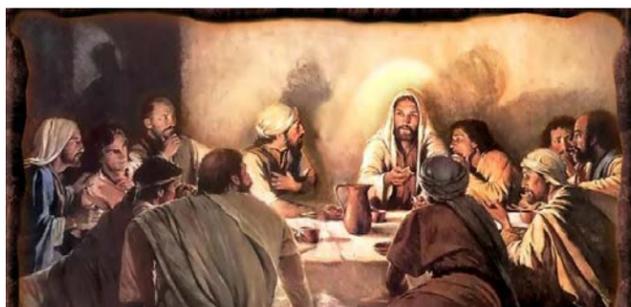
Jesus gave Peter, the first of the apostles, and to his successors, the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus promised that what Peter and his successors bound on earth would be bound in heaven, and that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church. Catholics obey the Pope, and the bishops in communion with him, in matters of faith and morals. (*The Code of Canon Law 1983, Can. 331*).

Where does it say how Catholics are to live ?

God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses after bringing the Israelites out of Egypt approximately 3,500 years ago. The commandments prohibit what is contrary to love of God and neighbor, and prescribe what is essential to it.

1. I am the Lord your God, you shall not have strange Gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's 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 neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.

Going beyond the Ten Commandments, Jesus gave us a new Commandment: to love one another as he loved us. He sacrificed his life to save everyone; and he invites us to imitate him, spending our lives to love and serve others.



How do the Commandments apply today?

Christian life is about love. The first 3 commandments tell us how to love God; the other 7 tell us how to love people. Because we are called to love and trust God, the 1st commandment forbids atheism, money-worship, and superstitions such as fortune-telling and horoscopes. The 2nd commandment, out of respect for God's holy name, forbids uttering it disrespectfully, and profaning sacred things. The 3rd commandment requires that we make time for God. Sports and other commitments on Sunday must be scheduled around Mass. Except for serious reasons, such as illness, missing Sunday Mass is a mortal sin.

The commandments to love others ("our neighbour") begin with the 4th commandment. We should honour and respect our parents and those in lawful authority. Parents, for their part, have a duty to create a harmonious family atmosphere, marked by kindness. Since human life is a divine gift, the 5th commandment forbids murder, abortion, and suicide.

The 6th and 9th commandments deal with nuptial love, requiring faithfulness in marriage. Since unity and procreation in marriage are indivisible, the 6th commandment forbids using contraception and sterilization to prevent pregnancy, and sexual activity outside marriage. Because of our human dignity, the 9th forbids thoughts of lust; it requires modesty and discretion in dress and speech.

The 7th and 10th commandments require social justice and solidarity with the poor. The 7th commandment forbids theft, tax evasion, charging unjust interest, waste, and making profit the exclusive reason for business; the 10th forbids greed, envy, and coveting another's possessions.

The 8th commandment forbids rash judgment, gossip and flattery. It requires speaking the truth with charity.



What is the difference between venial sin and mortal sin?

Sin is an offence against God in disobedience to his love (CCCC 392). Venial sin is less serious than mortal sin, but it harms our friendship with God, and our ability to love others. A mortal sin destroys all grace in the soul and takes away our supernatural life in God.

The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2005 (CCCC) states:

395. When does one commit a mortal sin?

One commits a mortal sin when there are simultaneously present: grave matter, full knowledge, and deliberate consent... and, if un-repented, leads us to the eternal death of hell.

291. What is required to receive Holy Communion?

...Anyone who is conscious of having committed a grave [mortal] sin must first receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before going to Communion...

No matter how many mortal sins someone has committed, or how long he has been in a state of mortal sin, God always welcomes the sinner back, just as the father did in the parable of the prodigal son.

How do Catholics get the inner strength they need?

For each period in a human being's life, there is a Sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ himself, to help us.

(CCCC) 220. The sacramental economy consists in the communication of the fruits of Christ's redemption through the celebration of the sacraments...

Baptism – takes away original sin and makes us children of God

Confirmation – gives an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which strengthens us

Eucharist – is the very sacrifice of Jesus' body and blood. In this sacrament we receive, not bread, but Jesus Christ himself

Confession – reconciles us with God after we have sinned, and strengthens us

Marriage – establishes the union of a man and woman for life, for the spouses' sanctification, and for the generation and education of children

Holy Orders – enables a man to act in the name of Christ, to preach, to celebrate the sacraments, and to be a shepherd

Anointing of the Sick – gives comfort, peace, courage, and the forgiveness of sins.

