

The Summary of Catechism of Christian Doctrine based on Baltimore Catechism

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God made us to show forth His goodness and to share with us His everlasting happiness in heaven. To gain the happiness of heaven we must know, love, and serve God in this world. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, teaches us how we are to know, love, and serve God. Jesus teaches us through the Catholic Church. The apostles' Creed contains the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church.

GOD AND HIS PERFECTIONS

God is above all creatures. He does not owe His existence to any other being. He has all perfections without limit. God always was and always will be. He always remains the same. He is also all-good, all-knowing, all-present, and almighty. He is all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just.

We know that there is a God because our reason tells us so. We know that the world we see about us could have been made only by a self-existing Being who is all-wise and almighty. We also know that there is a God from the truths which God Himself has revealed to us. These truths are found in the Bible and in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. The Fathers put into writing the truths taught by Christ and his apostles which were not in the Bible.

THE UNITY AND TRINITY OF GOD

There is only one God. In God there are three Divine Persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is God and the first Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Son is God and the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Ghost is God and the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. By the Blessed Trinity is meant one and the same God in three Divine Persons. The word *trinity* means the union of three in one.

The three Divine Persons are really distinct from one another. This means they are really separate from one another. The three Divine Persons are perfectly equal to one another, because all are one and the same God. Though really distinct from one another, the three Divine Persons are one and the same God because all have the one and the same Divine nature.

We cannot fully understand how the three Divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are the same God. This is a supernatural mystery. A supernatural mystery is a truth which we cannot fully understand, but which we firmly believe because we have God's word for it.

CREATION AND THE ANGELS

God, the Creator of heaven and earth, made all things from nothing by His almighty power. The chief creatures of God are angels and men.

The angels are created spirits. They do not have bodies, but they have understanding and free will. When God created the angels, He gave them great wisdom, power, and holiness. Not all the angels remained faithful to God. Some of them sinned.

The angels who remained faithful are called good angels. They entered into the eternal happiness of heaven where they see, love, and adore God. The good angels help us by praying for us. They act also as messengers from God to us and serve as our guardian angels. Our guardian angels help us by praying for us, by protecting us from harm, and by inspiring us to do good.

The angels who did not remain faithful to God were cast into hell. They are called bad angels or devils. The chief way in which the bad angels try to harm us is by tempting us to sin.

Some temptations come from the bad angels. Other temptations come from ourselves and from the persons and things around us. We can always resist temptation because no temptation can force us into sin. God will always help us if we ask Him.

THE CREATION AND THE FALL OF MAN

Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God. Man's likeness to God is chiefly in the soul. The soul is like God because it is a spirit having understanding and free will. The soul is destined to live forever.

The first man and woman were Adam and Eve. They were the first parents of the whole human race. The chief gift God bestowed on Adam and Eve was sanctifying grace. This made them children of God and gave them the right to heaven. God bestowed other gifts on Adam and Eve: happiness in the Garden of Paradise, great knowledge, control of the passions by reason, and freedom from suffering and death.

God gave Adam and Eve the commandment not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree that grew in the Garden of Paradise. However, Adam and Eve did not obey this commandment. They ate of the forbidden fruit. On account of their sin, Adam and Eve lost sanctifying grace, the right to heaven, and their special gifts. They became subject to death, to suffering, and to a strong inclination to evil. They were driven from the Garden of Paradise.

Because of the sin of Adam we, his descendants, come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace. This sin in us is called the original sin. We inherit Adam's punishment as we would have inherited his gifts had he been obedient to God. The chief punishments of Adam which we inherit through original sin are: death, suffering, ignorance, and a strong inclination to sin.

ACTUAL SIN

Original sin is not the only kind of sin. There is another kind called actual sin which we ourselves commit. Actual sin is any willful thought, desire, word, action, or omission forbidden by the law of God. There are two kinds of actual sin: mortal sin and venial sin.

Mortal sin is a grievous offense against the law of God. It is called mortal which means deadly, because it deprives the sinner of sanctifying grace. In addition, mortal sin makes the soul an enemy of God. It takes away the merit of all its good actions. It deprives it of the right of everlasting happiness in heaven and makes it deserving of everlasting punishment in hell. To make a sin mortal three things are necessary: (1) The thought, desire, word, action, or omission must be seriously wrong or considered seriously wrong; (2) The sinner must be mindful of the serious wrong; (3) The sinner must fully consent to it.

Venial sin is a less serious offense against the law of God. It does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and it can be pardoned even without sacrament of confession. A sin is venial when the evil done is not seriously wrong. It is venial when the evil done is seriously wrong but the sinner sincerely believes it is only slightly wrong, or does not give full consent to it. Venial sin harms us by making us less fervent in the service of God. It weakens our power to resist mortal sin. It also makes us deserving of God's punishment in this life or in purgatory.

We can keep from committing sin: (1) by praying and receiving the sacraments; (2) by remembering that God is always with us; (3) by recalling that our bodies are temples of the holy Ghost; (4) by keeping occupied with work and play; (5) by promptly resisting the sources of sin within us; (6) by avoiding the near

occasion of sin.

The capital sins are the chief sources of the sins which we commit ourselves. They are: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth. They are called capital sins because they are the chief reasons why men commit sin.

The near occasions of sin are all persons, places, or things that may easily lead us into sin.

THE INCARNATION

God did not abandon man after Adam fell into sin. God promised to send into the world a Saviour to free man from his sins and to reopen to him the gates of heaven.

The Saviour of all men is Jesus Christ. The chief teaching of the Catholic Church about Jesus is that He is God made man. Jesus Christ is God because He is the only Son of God. He has the same Divine nature as His Father. Jesus Christ is man because He is the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary and has a body and soul like ours.

Jesus Christ is only one Person, and that Person is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Jesus Christ has two natures: the nature of God and the nature of man.

The Son of God was not always man, but became man at the time of the Incarnation. At this time He kept His Divine nature, but He took to Himself a human nature, a body and soul like ours. The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This took place on Annunciation Day. On that day the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God.

Jesus was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Christmas Day in Bethlehem, more than nineteen hundred years ago. Jesus had no human father, but St. Joseph was the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the guardian, or foster father, of Christ.

THE REDEMPTION

Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the whole human race. He offered His suffering and death to God as a fitting sacrifice to make up for the sins of men. He regained for mankind the right to be children of God and heirs of heaven. This is what is meant by the Redemption.

The chief sufferings of Christ were His bitter agony of soul, His bloody sweat, His cruel scourging, His crowning with thorns, His crucifixion, and His death on the cross. Christ died on Good Friday, at a place called Golgotha, outside the city of Jerusalem. From the sufferings and death of Christ we learn God's love for man. We also learn the evil of sin for which God, who is all-just, demands such great satisfaction.

After He died the soul of Christ descended into limbo. There, the souls of the just were waiting for Him. Christ went to limbo to announce the joyful news that He had reopened heaven to mankind. While Christ's soul was in limbo, His body was in the holy sepulchre.

On Easter Sunday, the third day after His death, Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal. He rose from the dead to show that He is true God, and to teach us that we, too, shall rise from the dead. All men will rise from the dead, but only those who have been faithful to Christ will share in His glory.

Christ remained on earth forty days after His resurrection. He wished to prove that He had truly risen from the dead and to complete the instruction of the apostles. Christ ascended, body and soul, into heaven on Ascension Day. This was forty days after His resurrection.

The Apostles' Creed says that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. This means that our Lord as God is equal to the Father. It means that as man He shares above all the saints in the glory of His Father and exercises for all eternity the supreme authority of a King over all creatures. It also means that on the last day our Lord will come to pronounce a sentence of eternal reward or eternal punishment on every one who had ever lived in this world.

THE HOLY GHOST AND GRACE

The Holy Ghost is God and the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is equal to the Father and the Son because He is God. The Holy Ghost sanctifies souls through the gift of grace. He dwells in the Church as the source of its life.

Grace is a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation. There are two kinds of grace: sanctifying grace and actual grace.

Sanctifying grace is that grace which confers on our souls a new life that is, a sharing in the life of God Himself. The chief effects of sanctifying grace are: (1) It makes us holy and pleasing to God; (2) It makes us adopted children of God; (3) It makes us temples of the Holy Ghost; (4) It gives us the right to heaven. Sanctifying grace is necessary for salvation. It is the supernatural life which alone enables us to attain the supernatural happiness of heaven.

Actual grace is a supernatural help of God which enlightens our minds and strengthens our will to do good and to avoid evil. Unfortunately, we can resist the grace of God. Our will is free, and God does not force us to accept His grace. Actual grace is necessary for all who have attained the use of reason. Without it we cannot long resist the power of temptation nor perform other actions which merit a reward in heaven.

The principal ways of obtaining grace are prayer and the sacrament especially the Holy Eucharist. We can make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward by doing them for the love of God and by keeping ourselves in the state of grace.

THE VIRTUES AND GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

The chief supernatural powers that are bestowed on our souls with sanctifying grace are the three theological virtues and seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The three theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity. They are called theological virtues because they are about God. Faith is the virtue by which we firmly believe all the truths God has revealed, on the word of God revealing them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Hope is the virtue by which we firmly trust that God, who is all-powerful and faithful to His promises, will in His mercy give us eternal happiness and the means to obtain it. Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbors as ourselves for the love of God.

The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. These gifts help us by making us more alert to discern and more ready to do the will of God. Some of the effects in us of the gifts of the Holy Ghost are the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost (charity, joy,

peace, patience, benignity, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, and chastity), and the eight beatitudes.

Besides the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, there are other virtues called moral virtues. They are called moral virtues because they help us to lead moral, or good lives. They help us to treat persons and things in the right way, that is, according to the will of God. The chief moral virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. They are called cardinal virtues because they are like hinges on which hang all other moral virtues and our whole moral life. Some of the other moral virtues are: filial piety and patriotism, obedience, liberality, patience, humility, and chastity or purity.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Church is the congregation of all baptized persons united in the same true faith, the same sacrifice, and the same sacraments, under the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff and the bishops in communion with him. Jesus Christ founded the Church to bring all men to eternal salvation.

The Church leads men to salvation by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost who gives it life. The Holy Ghost began to dwell in the Church on Pentecost Sunday. This was the day on which He came down upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire. The Holy Ghost will dwell in the Church until the end of time. God the Father and God the Son sent the Holy Ghost to dwell in the Church. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost enables the Church to teach, to sanctify, and to rule the faithful in the name of Christ, its Divine Founder, who remains forever the invisible head of the Church.

Christ gave the power to teach, to sanctify, and to rule the members of His Church to the apostles, the first bishops of the Church. Christ intended that this power should be exercised also by their successors, the bishops of the Church. Christ made Saint Peter the head of the apostles and the chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church. Christ did not intend that the special power of chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church should be exercised by Saint Peter alone. He intended that this power should be passed down to his successor, the Bishop of Rome, who is the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible head of the Church.

The priests, especially parish priests, assist the bishops in the care of souls. The laity of the Church are all its members who do not belong to the clerical or to the religious state. The laity can help the Church in her care for souls by leading lives that will reflect credit on the Church, and by cooperating with their bishops and priests.

THE MARK AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE CHURCH

The one true Church established by Christ is the Catholic Church. It alone has the marks of the true Church. Those marks of the Church are certain clear signs by which all men can recognize it as the true Church founded by Jesus Christ. The chief marks of the Church are four: It is one, holy, catholic or universal, and apostolic. We know that no other church has these four marks.

The chief attributes, or characteristics, of the Catholic Church are authority, infallibility, and indefectibility.

The members of the Catholic Church are united by supernatural bonds with one another and with Christ, their Head. In this way the Church resembles the members and head of the living human body and is called the Mystical Body of Christ.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS - THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

The union of the faithful on earth, the blessed in heaven, and the souls in purgatory, with Christ as their Head, is known as "the communion of saints." Through the communion of saints the blessed in heaven can help the souls in purgatory and the faithful on earth. They do this by praying for them. The faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, should honor the blessed in heaven and pray to them. The blessed in heaven are worthy of honor and, as friends of God, will help the faithful on earth. The faithful on earth, as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, can help one another. They can do so by practicing supernatural charity, especially by performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

God has given to the Church, through Jesus Christ, the power to forgive sins, no matter how great or how many they are, if sinners truly repent. This is what is meant by the phrase "the forgiveness of sins" in the Apostle Creed.

*" I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ..."
" whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them ..."*

THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE EVERLASTING

At the end of the world the bodies of all men will rise from the earth. They will be united to their souls, and they will never be separated again. The bodies of the just will share forever in the glory of their souls. The bodies of the damned will share in the eternal punishment of their souls.

The body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from corruption. It was raised from the dead and taken into heaven. This is called the special privilege of her Assumption.

The judgment which will be passed on each one of us immediately after death is called the particular judgment. The rewards or punishments appointed for men after the particular judgment are heaven, purgatory, and hell.

The judgment which will be passed on all men immediately after the general resurrection is called the general judgment. The general judgment is passed that the justice, wisdom, and mercy of God may be glorified in the presence of all.

THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

To be saved we must believe what God has revealed, and we must keep God's law. The two great commandments that contain the whole law of God are: (1) Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength; (2) Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself.

We love God, our neighbor, and ourselves: (1) by keeping the commandments of God and the Church; (2) by performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. There are ten commandments of God, seven chief corporal works of mercy and seven chief spiritual works of mercy. We should not be satisfied merely in keeping the commandments of God, but we should always be ready to do good deeds, even when they are not commanded. Everyone, however, is obliged to perform the works of mercy, according to his own ability and the need of his neighbor.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF GOD

The first commandment of God is: I am the Lord thy God; thou shall not have strange gods before Me.

The first commandment requires us to offer to God alone the supreme worship that is due Him. We worship God by acts of faith, hope, and charity, and by adoring Him and praying to Him.

Faith obliges us: (1) to make efforts to find out what God has revealed; (2) to believe firmly what God has revealed; (3) to profess our faith openly whenever necessary. A Catholic sins against faith by infidelity, apostasy, heresy, indifferentism, and by taking part in non-Catholic worship.

Hope obliges us to trust firmly that God will give us eternal life and the means to obtain it. The sins against hope are presumption and despair.

Charity obliges us to love God above all things because He is infinitely good, and to love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. The chief sins against charity are hatred of God and of our neighbor, sloth, envy, and scandal.

In addition to sins against faith, hope, and charity, the first commandment forbids all superstition and sacrilege.

NOTES:

Apostasy: Complete rejection of the truths of the Catholic faith; heresy: rejection of one or more truths of the Catholic religion; indifferentism: a heresy which teaches that all religions are equally good; infidelity: lack of faith or disbelief in divinely revealed truths; sloth: laziness.

HONORING THE SAINTS, RELICS, AND IMAGES

We honor our Mother. We honor the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

We honor the saints in heaven because they practiced great virtue when they were on earth. In honoring those who are the chosen friends of God, we honor God Himself.

We honor the saints (1) by imitating their holy lives; (2) by praying to them; (3) by showing respect to their relics and images. When we pray to the saints we ask them to offer their prayers to God for us. We know that the saints will pray for us because they are with God and have great love for us. We honor relics because they are the bodies of the saints or objects connected with the saints or with our Lord.

The first commandment forbids us to give honor to the saints that belongs to God alone. The first commandment forbids the making or the use of statues and pictures when they promote false worship. We should show respect to the pictures of those whom we honor or love on earth. We honor Christ and the saints when we pray before the crucifix, relics, and sacred images. We are honoring the persons they represent. We adore Christ, and we venerate the saints. We never pray to the crucifix or to the images and relics of the saints but to the persons they represent.

THE SECOND AND THIRD COMMANDMENT OF GOD

The second commandment requires us always to speak with reverence of God, of the saints, and of holy things. It also commands us to be truthful in our oaths and faithful to them and to our vows.

The third commandment requires us to worship God in a special manner on Sunday, the Lord's day. The Church commands us to worship God on Sunday by assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. By the third commandment of God we are forbidden to do any unnecessary servile Work on Sunday. Servile work is allowed on Sunday when the honor of God, our own need, or that of our neighbor requires it.

THE FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH COMMANDMENTS

By the fourth commandment we are commanded to respect and love our parents, to obey them in all that is not sinful, and to help them when they are in need. Besides our parents the fourth commandment obliges us to respect and to obey all our lawful superiors. By this same commandment, parents and superiors are required to provide for the spiritual and bodily welfare of those under their care. The fourth commandment requires of us certain duties as citizens. A citizen must love his country, be sincerely interested in its welfare, and respect and obey its lawful authority.

By the fifth commandment we are commanded to take proper care of the spiritual and bodily well-being of ourselves and of our neighbor. This commandment forbids murder and suicide, and also fighting, anger, hatred, revenge, drunkenness, and bad example.

By the sixth commandment we are commanded to be pure and modest in our outward behavior. This commandment forbids all impurity in words, looks, and actions, wheter alone or with others.

THE SEVENTH, EIGHTH, NINTH, AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS

The seventh commandment requires us to respect what belongs to others, to live up to our business agreements, and to pay our just debts. This commandment forbids all dishonesty such as: (1) stealing, (2) cheating, (3) unjust keeping of what belongs to others, (4) unjust damages to the property of others, and (5) the accepting of bribes by public officials.

The eighth commandment requires us to speak the truth in all things, but especially in what concerns the good name and honor of others. The eighth commandment forbids: (1) lies, (2) rash judgment, (3) detraction, (4) calumny, and (5) the telling of secrets we are bound to keep. A person who has sinned by distraction or calumny, or has told a secret he is bound to keep, must repair the harm he has done to his neighbor, as far as he is able.

The ninth commandment requires us to be pure in thought and in desire. Mere thoughts about impure things are not always sinful in themselves, but such thoughts are dangerous.

The tenth commandment forbids all desire to take or to keep unjustly what belongs to others. This commandment also forbids envy at the success of others.

THE FIRST AND SECOND COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

The Catholic Church has the right to make laws from Jesus Christ. Jesus said to the apostles, the first bishops of His Church. "*Whatever you bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven.*" The right to make laws is exercised by the bishops, the successors of the apostles, and especially by the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, the head of the apostles. There are six chief commandments or laws of the Church.

The *first commandment of the Church* requires us to assist at Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation. A Catholic who, through his own fault, misses Mass on a Sunday or holyday of obligation commits a mortal sin. The Church obliges us to abstain from servile work on holydays of obligation, just as on Sundays, as far as we are able.

The *second commandment of the Church* requires us to fast and to abstain on the days appointed. The Church commands us to fast and to abstain: (1) that we may control the desires of the flesh; (2) that we may raise our minds more freely to God; (3) that we may make satisfaction for our sins. The Church makes Friday a day of abstinence to remind us of our Lord's death on Good Friday. We can know the days appointed for fast or abstinence from the instructions of our bishops and priests.

Note: On a fast day, you may eat one full meal. You may not eat meat on a day of abstinence.

THE THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH COMMANDMENTS

The *third commandment of the Church* requires us to confess our sins at least once a year. This means that we are strictly obliged to make a good confession within the year if we have a mortal sin to confess. However, we should go to confession frequently. Frequent confession greatly help us to overcome temptation, to keep in the state of grace, and to grow in virtue.

The fourth commandment of the Church requires us to receive Holy Communion during the Easter time. The Eater time in the United States begins with the first Sunday of Lent and ends on Trinity Sunday. A Catholic who neglects to receive Holy Communion worthily during the Easter time commits a mortal sin.

The *fifth commandment of the Church* requires us to contribute to the support of the Church. This means each of us is obliged to do his fair share in meeting the expenses of the Holy See, of the diocese, and of the parish.

The *sixth commandment of the Church* requires us to observe the Church's laws concerning marriage. The ordinary law of the Church to be observed at the wedding of a Catholic is: "A Catholic can contract a true marriage only in the presence of an authorized priest and two witnesses." The Church forbids Catholics to contract marriage with certain persons, for instance, with non-Catholics, with a second cousin, or with any relative closer than a second cousin.

THE SACRAMENTS

A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. There are seven sacraments. The sacraments receive their power to give grace from God, through the merits of Jesus Christ. All the sacraments give sanctifying grace. Each of the sacraments also gives a special grace called sacramental grace. Sacramental grace helps one to carry out the particular purpose of the sacrament. The sacraments always give grace if we receive them with the right dispositions.

BAPTISM

The sacrament of Baptism gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace. Through this sacrament we become children of God and heirs of heaven. Baptism takes away original sin. It also takes away actual sins and all the punishments due to them, if the person baptized be guilty of any actual sins and is truly sorry for them. Baptism makes us members of the Church and through it we become capable of receiving the other sacraments. Baptism is necessary for the salvation of all men because Christ has said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." 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.

Note: An unbaptized person receives the baptism of desire when he loves God above all things and desires to do all that is necessary for his salvation. Children should be baptized as soon as possible after birth. Catholic parents who put off for a long time, or entirely neglect, the Baptism of their children commit a mortal sin.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is the sacrament through which the Holy Ghost comes to us in a special way. This sacrament enables us to profess our faith as strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ. The bishop is the usual minister of Confirmation.

Confirmation increases sanctifying grace, gives its sacramental grace, and imprints a lasting character on the soul. The sacramental grace of Confirmation helps us to live our faith loyally and to profess it courageously. The character of confirmation is a spiritual and indelible sign which marks the Christian as a soldier in the army of Christ.

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

All Catholics should be confirmed. With Confirmation we are strengthened against the dangers to salvation and are better prepared to defend our Catholic faith.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST

The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice. In it Our Saviour Jesus Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine, is contained, offered, and received.

Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the night before He died. First, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and giving it to His Apostles, said: "Take and eat; this is My body." Then He took a cup of wine, blessed it, and giving it to them, said: "All of you drink of this; for this is My blood of the new covenant which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins." Finally, Jesus said to His apostles: "Do this in remembrance of Me."

When Our Lord said, "This is My body," the entire substance of the bread was changed into His body. When He said, "This is My blood," the entire substance of the wine was changed into His blood. Jesus Christ is whole and entire both under the appearances of bread and under the appearances of wine.

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. Christ gave His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood at the last Supper. At that time He ordained the apostles priests by saying to them: "Do this in remembrance of Me." Priests use their power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ at the Consecration of the Mass.

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; (3) to remain ever on our altar as a proof of His love for us and to be worshiped by us.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

A sacrifice is the offering of a victim by a priest to God alone, and the destruction of it in some way to acknowledge that God is the Creator and Lord of all things. The Mass is the sacrifice of the New Law. Jesus said the first Mass at the Last Supper, the night before He died. In the Mass Christ, through the ministry of the priest, offers Himself to God in an unbloody manner, under the appearances of bread and wine. 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.

The Mass is offered for the following purposes: (1) to adore God as our Creator and Lord; (2) to thank God for His many favors; (3) to ask God to bestow His blessing on all men; (4) to satisfy the justice of God for the sins committed against Him.

We should assist Mass with reverence, attention, and devotion. The best method of assisting at Mass is to unite with the priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice, and to receive Holy Communion.

HOLY COMMUNION

Holy communion is the receiving of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The chief effects of a worthy Holy Communion are: (1) a closer union with Our Lord and more fervent love of God and of our neighbor; (2) an increase of sanctifying grace; (3) preservation from mortal sin and the remission of venial sin; (4) the lessening of our inclination to sin and the help to practice good works.

To receive Holy Communion worthily it is necessary to be free from mortal sin and to obey the laws of the Church on the fast required before Holy Communion. We should prepare ourselves for Holy Communion by thinking of our Divine Redeemer whom we are about to receive. We should also make fervent acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition. After Holy Communion we should spend some time adoring Our Lord, thank Him, renewing our promises of love and of obedience to him, and asking Him for blessings for ourselves and others.

We are obliged to receive Holy Communion during Easter time each year and when in danger of death. It is well to receive Holy Communion often, even daily. The intimate union with Jesus Christ, the source of all holiness and the Giver of all graces, is the greatest aid to a holy life.

PENANCE

The sacrament of Penance is the sacrament by which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest. The priest has the power to forgive sins from Jesus Christ. Our Lord said to the apostles and to their successors in the priesthood: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." The effects of the sacrament of Penance, worthily received, are: (1) sanctifying grace; (2) the forgiveness of sins; (3) the remission of the eternal punishment, if necessary, and also, of part at least, of the temporal punishment due to our sins; (4) the help to avoid sin in future; (5) the restoration of the merits of our good works if they have been lost by mortal sin.

To receive the sacrament of Penance 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 priests; (5) be willing to

perform the penance the priest gives us.

CONTRITION

Contrition is sincere sorrow for having offend God, and hatred for the sins we have committed, with a firm purpose of sinning no more. God will not forgive us any sin, whether mortal or venial, unless we have true contrition for it. This means: (1) Our sorrow must come from our heart, and not merely from our lips; (2) With the help of God's grace we must be sorry because we have offended God and not for any natural or human reason; (3) We must hate sin above every other evil and be willing to endure anything rather than offend God by sin in the future; (4) We must be sorry for every mortal sin which we may have had the misfortune to commit.

There two kinds of contrition: perfect contrition and imperfect contrition. 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. Our contrition is imperfect when, with God's grace, we are sorry for offending Him because our sins are so hateful in themselves or because we fear God's punishment.

To receive the sacrament of Penance worthily, imperfect contrition is sufficient. But sincere perfect contrition is more pleasing to God, and because with His help we can always have it, we should always try to have perfect contrition.

A firm purpose of sinning no more is the sincere resolve not to sin, and to avoid as far as possible the near occasions of sin. If a person has only venial sins to confess, he must have the purpose of avoiding at least one of them.

CONFESSION

Confession is telling of our sins to an authorized priest for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness. 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: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

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 better to do so. To make a good confession we must: (1) accuse ourselves of our sins with a sense of guilt that we have offended God; (2) tell our sins honestly and frankly; (3) confess at least all our mortal sins, telling their kind, the number of time we have committed each, and the circumstances that may change their nature.

The priest gives us a penance after confession that: (1) we may make some atonement to God for our sins; (2) we may receive help to avoid them in the future; (3) we may make some satisfaction for the temporal punishment due to them.

Two kinds of punishment are due to sin: (1) the eternal punishment of hell, due to unforgiven mortal sins; (2) temporal punishment, lasting only for a time, due to venial sins and also to mortal sins after they have been forgiven. The sacrament of Penance, worthily received, always takes away all eternal punishment, but it does not take away all temporal punishment. Besides the penance given after confession, the chief means of making up for the debt of our temporal punishment are: prayer, fasting, almsgiving, the works of mercy, the patient endurance of sufferings, and indulgences.

HOW TO MAKE A GOOD CONFESSION

We should take sufficient time to prepare ourselves to make a good confession. We should examine our conscience, and especially we should arouse in our hearts sincere sorrow for our sins and a firm purpose not to commit them again.

We should begin our confession by making the sign of the cross and saying to the priest: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." We then should tell how long it has been since our last confession.

Next, if we have committed any mortal sins since our last confession, we tell them and also any that we may have forgotten in previous confessions. We must tell the nature and number of each. We may also confess any venial sins we wish to mention. When we have committed no mortal sin since our last confession, we should confess our venial sins, or some sins told in a previous confession for which we are again sorry. This is necessary that the priest may give us absolution.

We should end our confession by saying: "I am sorry for these and for all the sins of my past life, especially for ..." It is well to tell one or several of the sins which we have previously confessed and for which we are particularly sorry.

After confessing our sins, we should answer truthfully any question the priest asks. We should ask for advice if we feel that we need it. We should listen carefully to the instruction of the priest, and accept the penance he gives us. While the priest is giving us absolution we should say from our heart the act of contrition.

When we leave the confessional we should thank God for the sacrament we have received. We should ask Our Lord to make up for the imperfections of our confession. Then we should promptly and with devotion perform our penance.

TEMPORAL PUNISHMENT AND INDULGENCES

An indulgence is the remission or pardon of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven. This remission is granted by the Church. The Church does so by applying to its members part of the infinite satisfaction of Jesus Christ and of the more than sufficient satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin and the saints.

There are two kinds of indulgences, plenary and partial. A plenary indulgence is the remission of all the temporal punishment due to our sins. A partial indulgence is the remission of part of the temporal punishment due to our sins.

To gain an indulgence for ourselves we must be in the state of grace. We must also have at least the general intention to gain the indulgence, and we must perform the works required by the Church. We cannot gain indulgences for other living persons. The Church, however, permits most indulgences to be applied to the souls in purgatory.

EXTREME UNCTION AND HOLY ORDERS

Extreme unction is the sacrament which, through the anointing with blessed oil by the priest, and through his prayer, gives health and strength to the soul and sometimes to the body. All Catholics who have reached the use of reason and are in danger of death from sickness, accident, or old age should receive Extreme Unction.

The effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction 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 venial sins and the cleansing of our soul from the remains of sin; (4) health of body when it is good for the soul.

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which men receive the power and grace to perform the sacred duties of bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church. 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 his sacred ministry; (3) a character, lasting forever, which gives a special sharing in the priesthood of Christ and which gives the priest special supernatural powers. The chief supernatural powers of the priest are: (1) to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Sacrifice; (2) to forgive sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

Catholics should show reverence and honor to the priest. He is the representative of Christ Himself. In His name the priest teaches and administers the sacrament.

MATRIMONY

Matrimony is the sacrament by which a baptized man and a baptized woman bind themselves for life in a lawful marriage. In this sacrament they receive the grace to discharge their duties. The chief duty of husband and wife is to be faithful to each other, and to provide in every way for the welfare of the children God may give them.

The bond of the sacrament of Matrimony lasts until the death of husband or wife. Christ said: "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." A husband, during the life of his wife, cannot have another wife, nor can a wife during the life of her husband have another husband.

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. The sacrament of Matrimony gives to those receiving it: (1) an increase of sanctifying grace; (2) the special help of God for husband and wife to love each other faithfully, to bear with each other's faults, and to bring up their children properly.

NOTE: What should Catholics do to prepare for a holy and happy marriage?

To prepare for a holy and happy marriage, Catholics should: first pray that God may direct their choice; second, seek the advice of their parents and confessors; third, practice the virtues, especially chastity; fourth, frequently receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

THE SACRAMENTALS

Sacramentals are holy things or actions which the Church uses to obtain for us from God spiritual and temporal favors. The sacramentals obtain favors from God through the prayers of the Church offered for those who make use of them and through the devotion they inspire. The chief 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 spirits.

The chief kinds of sacramentals are: (1) blessings given by priests and bishops; (2) exorcisms against evil spirits; (3) blessed objects of devotion. The blessed objects of devotion most used by Catholics are: holy water, candles, ashes, palms, crucifixes, images of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, medals,

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

PRAYER

Prayer is the lifting up our minds and hearts to God. 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; (4) to ask for graces for ourselves and for others.

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; (5) with perseverance.

There are two kinds of prayers: mental prayer and vocal prayer. Mental prayer is that prayer by which we unite our hearts with God while thinking of His holy truths. Vocal prayer is that prayer which comes from the mind and heart and is spoken by the lips. We may use our own words in praying to God; and it is well to do so often. The prayers that every Catholic should know by heart are: the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, the Glory be to the Father, and the acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition.

We usually begin and end our prayers with the sign of the cross. We make the sign of the cross to express two important mysteries of the Christian religion, the Blessed Trinity and the Redemption.