

## 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

## How does faith influence daily life?

All Christians are called to become holy and to spread the Catholic faith in and through their ordinary activities, which includes 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...*

Also, 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](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](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](http://www.vatican.va)

– *The website of the Archdiocese of Vancouver* is [www.rcav.org](http://www.rcav.org)

– *Two other helpful sites are:*  
[www.catholicscomehome.org](http://www.catholicscomehome.org) and  
[www.whyimcatholic.org](http://www.whyimcatholic.org)



## Who is Jesus Christ?

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life."*  
John 3:16

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, fully divine and fully human.

Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6

All who are saved are saved by Jesus. This includes those who try to be good but, through no fault of their own, they do not know about Jesus during their life on earth.

## What is the Catholic Church?

The Catholic Church is the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Jesus was born about 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem. He entrusted His Church with the full means of salvation. Guided and protected by the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church possesses the fullness of truth and grace. This bulletin describes what Catholics believe, how they are to live, where they get inner strength, and how they form a deep and loving friendship with God.

# Catholic Q & A

*Information on the faith and life 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 among the apostles, and his successors, the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus promised that what Peter and his successors bound or loosed on earth would be bound or loosed in heaven, and that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church. In matters of faith and morals the Pope and the bishops in union with him are protected from teaching error, which guarantees our access to the truth Jesus revealed.

## How do Catholics get the inner strength they need?

Christ instituted seven sacraments to “give birth and increase healing and mission to the Christian’s life of faith.” (CCC 1210)

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

**Baptism** – takes away all sin, “original” and “personal”, and makes us children of God

**Confirmation** – gives an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which strengthens our bond with Christ and our ability to spread and defend the faith.

**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.

## Where does it say how Catholics are called to live?

“I have been crucified with Christ: I no longer live, but Christ lives in me, and I live by faith in the Son of God who gave himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20). In our new life in Christ, begun in Baptism, each person is called to become holy, to become a saint. To help us live this call to holiness, God gave us Ten Commandments, which prohibit what is contrary to love of God and neighbour, 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, at the Last Supper Jesus gave us a new Commandment: to love one another as he loved us. He sacrificed his life to save everyone; and 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 1<sup>st</sup> commandment forbids atheism, money-worship, and superstitions such as fortune-telling and horoscopes. The 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment, out of respect for God’s holy name, forbids uttering it disrespectfully, and profaning sacred things. The 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> commandment forbids murder, abortion, and suicide as well as drunkenness and illegal drug use.

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

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

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



## What is 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:*

“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...”

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 unrepented, leads us to the eternal death of hell.”

Immediately after death each person is judged by God on how loving he has been during life. After this judgment each soul will go either to heaven or hell. Before entering heaven imperfect souls may have to spend some time in purgatory. No matter how many mortal sins one has committed, or how long one has been in a state of mortal sin, God always welcomes the sinner back, just as the father welcomed his son back in the parable of the prodigal son.