



Study Guide

Version 1.0

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Catholicism: Now I Get It!
Study Guide
Version 1.0

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 – “Founded By Jesus: Now I Get... the Catholic Church’s Claim”	2
CHAPTER 2 – "Now I Get... to the Bottom of Things"	9
CHAPTER 3 – "Now I Get... Infallibility"	15
CHAPTER 4 – "Now I Get... Confession"	21
CHAPTER 5 – "Now I Get... the Real Presence"	25
CHAPTER 6 – "Now I Get... Confirmation"	33
CHAPTER 7 – "Now I Get... Heaven"	42
CHAPTER 8 – "Now I Get... Purgatory"	50
CHAPTER 9 – "Now I Get... Judgment Day"	55
CHAPTER 10 – "Now I Get... Hell"	63
CHAPTER 11 – "Got Morals?"	69
CHAPTER 12 – "Now I Get... Penance"	81
CHAPTER 13 – "Now I Get... The Saints"	87
CHAPTER 14 – "Now I Get... Mary"	91
CHAPTER 15 – "Now We Are Divided"	98

Editor’s Note:

This document is filled with underlined hyperlinks, including most of the “Further Reading” and “Helpful Media” titles. If you are reading a printed version of this document, you can click on those links in the World Wide Web version of the Study Guide: <http://stillcatholic.com/guide.htm>.

CHAPTER 1 – “Founded By Jesus: Now I Get... the Catholic Church’s Claim”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What does the Catholic Church have that no other Church has?
2. Which apostle was chosen to lead Christ’s sheep? Which Apostle was the Rock on which Jesus built His Church?
3. What is Petrine succession? What is apostolic succession?
4. Name the first 10 popes.
5. What is the largest single Christian denomination in the world?
6. What makes the Catholic Church think it has Christ’s own authority to rule and guide Christ’s flock on Earth?
7. What does it mean when we say we believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church?
8. What Church Council is mentioned by the Bible? When was the most recent Church Council?
9. Name 5 to 10 Early Church Fathers. What was their role in the Early Church?
10. Who is St. Augustine? What are two of his most famous works?
11. What is the Biblical basis for each of the Seven Sacraments?
12. What name refers to Peter in John 1:42? Hint: It’s the Aramaic word for “Rock.”

Homework: Memorize Matthew 16: 18-19

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The Bible

Catechism of the Catholic Church Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (short version of catechism- released Oct. 2005!)

Pillar of Fire, Pillar of Truth. (booklet) San Diego, CA: Catholic Answers, 1996.

Upon This Rock: St. Peter and the Primacy of Rome in Scripture and the Early Church Stephen K. Ray. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1999

Four Witnesses: The Early Church in Her Own Words by Rod Bennett. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000

Jesus, Peter & the Keys by Scott Butler, Norman Dahlgren, and David Hess. Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing Co., 1996

Beginning Apologetics: How to Explain and Defend the Catholic Faith. Farmington, NM: San Juan Catholic Seminars, 1993-1996.

By What Authority: An Evangelical Discovers Catholic Tradition by Mark P. Shea, Our Sunday Visitor, 1996.

Where is *That* in the Bible? by Patrick Madrid, Our Sunday Visitor, 2001

Why is *That* in Tradition? by Patrick Madrid, Our Sunday Visitor, 2002.

The Papacy: Learning Guide by Stephen K. Ray and R. Dennis Walters, Catholic Answers 2003.

The 33 Doctors of the Church. By Rev Christopher Rengers, O.F.M. Cap., Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 2000

The Early Church by Henry Chadwick, London: Penguin Books, 1993. (first published in Pelican Books 1967)

The Apostolic Fathers by Fr. Jack Sparks

Apologetics Concordance (This is the Bible cheat-sheet! One laminated page filled with Bible quotes by category)

Set of Six Apologetics booklets (for beginners!)

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

www.newadvent.org/cathen/11744a.htm (St. Peter)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/11451b.htm (Papacy)

www.newadvent.org/fathers/ (The Fathers of the Church)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/12260a.htm (The Pope)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/01637a.htm (The Apostolic Fathers)

www.newadvent.org/fathers/ (Writings of the Church Fathers)

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.chnetwork.org/scotthconv.htm (The Scott Hahn Conversion Story)

www.chnetwork.org/daconv.htm (The Dave Armstrong Conversion Story)

www.chnetwork.org/apostchurch.htm (The Apostolic Church)

HELPFUL MEDIA

CD ROM: “Welcome to the Catholic Church on CD-ROM” (Harmony Media, Inc.)

Video: PETER: Keeper of the Keys (filmed on location in Rome and the Holy Land with Stephen Ray)

Video: JESUS: The Word Became Flesh (filmed on location with Steve Ray)

Video: PAUL: Contending for the Faith (filmed on location with Steve Ray)

Video: Moses: Signs, Sacraments, Salvation (filmed on location with Steve Ray)

Video The Greatest Figures in Salvation History: A Closer Look at Moses and Peter (DVD)

Audiotapes: “Beyond Reasonable Doubt: Tim Staples Live” (set of 6 audiotapes), St. Joseph Communications, West Covina, CA.

Video or audiotape: “The Bible Made Me Do It – The Conversion Story of Tim Staples”

Video: The Scott Hahn Conversion Story (VHS)

SCRIPTURE

What did Jesus say about His Church?

Luke 10:16

"He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

Matthew 16:18-19

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 18:18

Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven

Matthew 18:17

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Matthew 28: 18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "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."

John 14:16

And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever

For Bible verses related to St. Peter, see John 21:17, Luke 24:34, Acts 1:23-26, Acts 15:7, Acts 15:19, Acts 10:44-46, Acts 2:41, Acts 5:1-11, Acts 3:6-7, Acts 8:21

John 1:42

He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter). (Note: Cephas means "Rock" in Aramaic)

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT CHRIST'S CHURCH?

St. Irenaeus

"But since it would be too long to enumerate in such a volume as this the succession of all the churches, we shall confound all those who, in whatever manner, whether through self-satisfaction or vainglory, or through blindness and wicked opinion, assemble other than where it is proper, by pointing out here the successions of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, that church which has the tradition and the faith which comes down to us after having been announced to men by the apostles. With that church, because of its superior origin, all the churches must agree, that is, all the faithful in the whole world, and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition" (Against Heresies 3:3:2 [A.D. 189]).

St. Cyprian of Carthage (1)

"The Lord says to Peter: 'I say to you,' he says, 'that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. And to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever things you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, they shall be loosed also in heaven' [Matt. 16:18–19]). ... On him [Peter] he builds the Church, and to him he gives the command to feed the sheep [John 21:17], and although he assigns a like power to all the apostles, yet he founded a single chair [cathedra], and he established by his own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were also what Peter was [i.e., apostles], but a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and one chair. So too, all [the apostles] are shepherds, and the flock is shown to be one, fed by all the apostles in single-minded accord. If someone does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he [should] desert the chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, can he still be confident that he is in the Church?" (The Unity of the Catholic Church 4; 1st edition [A.D. 251]).

St. Cyprian of Carthage (2)

"There is one God and one Christ, and one Church, and one chair founded on Peter by the word of the Lord. It is not possible to set up another altar or for there to be another priesthood besides that one altar and that one priesthood. Whoever has gathered elsewhere is scattering" (Letters 43[40]:5 [A.D. 253]).

St. Jerome

"I follow no leader but Christ and join in communion with none but your blessedness [Pope Damasus I], that is, with the chair of Peter. I know that this is the rock on which the Church has been built. Whoever eats the Lamb outside this house is profane. Anyone who is not in the ark of Noah will perish when the flood prevails" (Letters 15:2 [A.D. 396]).

"The church here is split into three parts, each eager to seize me for its own. . . . Meanwhile I keep crying, 'He that is joined to the chair of Peter is accepted by me!' . . .

Therefore, I implore your blessedness [Pope Damasus I] . . . tell me by letter with whom it is that I should communicate in Syria" (ibid., 16:2).

St. Augustine

"There are many other things which rightly keep me in the bosom of the Catholic Church. The consent of the people and nations keeps me, her authority keeps me, inaugurated by miracles, nourished in hope, enlarged by love, and established by age. The succession of priests keep me, from the very seat of the apostle Peter (to whom the Lord after his resurrection gave charge to feed his sheep) down to the present episcopate [of Pope Siricius]" (Against the Letter of Mani Called "The Foundation" 5 [397 A.D.]).

St. Ambrose of Milan

"[Christ] made answer: 'You are Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church. . . . ' Could he not, then, strengthen the faith of the man to whom, acting on his own authority, he gave the kingdom, whom he called the rock, thereby declaring him to be the foundation of the Church [Matt. 16:18]?" (The Faith 4:5 [379 A.D.]).

"It is to Peter that he says: 'You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church' [Matt. 16:18]. Where Peter is, there is the Church. And where the Church is, no death is there, but life eternal" (Commentary on Twelve Psalms of David 40:30 [389 A.D.]).

St. Clement's letter to James

"Be it known to you, my lord, that Simon [Peter], who, for the sake of the true faith, and the most sure foundation of his doctrine, was set apart to be the foundation of the Church, and for this end was by Jesus himself, with his truthful mouth, named Peter" (Letter of Clement to James 2 [221 A.D.]).

For further quotes from Church Fathers, see

http://www.catholic.com/library/church_papacy.asp and the three-volume book *The Faith of the Fathers* by William A. Jurgens, Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

1. Make time to read the Bible, starting with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the New Testament. Meditate prayerfully over Jesus' words.
2. Are there areas where you do not trust the authority of Church teaching? If so, make it a point to research those teachings and the Biblical and historic basis for them. Find out why the Church teaches them. Pray.
3. Pray for Pope Benedict XVI and his intentions. Pray for Christian unity.
4. Pray for other Church leaders in authority – the bishop of your diocese and your parish priests. Diocesan priests are swamped with duties these days. Are you able to assist with some parish program or start a new one? Perhaps a Bible study, a Young Adult Group, or a Service Team?

CHAPTER 2 – "Now I Get... to the Bottom of Things"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the Argument from Design? the Argument from First Cause? the Argument from Motion? the Argument from Moral Law?
2. What made Antony Flew, formerly one of the world's leading atheist scholars, withdraw his support for atheism?
3. What evidence is there that Jesus rose from the dead? How many people saw him after he rose from the dead?
4. What evidence is there that Scripture was written by eye-witnesses of Jesus and the Apostles?
5. In Jn 20-28, how does the Apostle Thomas address Jesus?
6. What Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus?
7. What are some of the miracles recorded in the Bible?
8. What role do miracles continue to play in Christianity?
9. What discoveries about DNA boost the arguments for intelligent design of the universe?
10. What is the difference between Darwinism and intelligent design?
11. What historical and theological errors were contained in Dan Brown's best-selling book "The Da Vinci Code?"

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Beginning Apologetics 4: How to Answer Atheists and New Agers (booklet by Fr. Frank Chacon)

Decoding Da Vinci: The Facts Behind the Fiction of by Amy Welborn

Handbook of Christian Apologetics by Peter Kreeft & Ronald K. Tacelli

The Creator and the Cosmos: How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God (Hugh Ross, NavPress, 1995, Colorado Springs, CO)

Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis (focusing on evidence for Christianity)

The Case for a Creator by Lee Strobel

The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel (focusing on evidence for Christianity)

The Case for Faith by Lee Strobel (focusing on evidence for Christianity)

The Life of Christ by Fulton Sheen (focusing on evidence for Christianity)

The Old Riddle and the Newest Answers by John GERARD ((London, 1904).

Essays on Un-natural History by John Gerard

THE UNKNOWN GOD by Alfred Noyes

Apologetics and Christian Doctrine by Archbishop Michael Sheehan

Principles of Natural Theology by George Hayward Joyce, 1923

Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine by Archbishop Michael Sheehan

God and the Supernatural by Father Cuthbert

Voyage to Lourdes by Alexis Carrel, Nobel Prize winner in medicine
The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ by Gary R. Habermas,
The Historical Reliability of the Gospels by Craig L. Blomberg
New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable? by F.F. Bruce
Raised from the Dead: True Stories of 400 Resurrection Miracles by Fr. Albert J. Hebert, S.M.
Eucharistic Miracles by Joan Carroll Cruz
The Incorruptibles by Joan Carroll Cruz
The Stigmata and Modern Science by Charles Fr. M. Carty
Mysteries, Marvels, Miracles in the Lives of the Saints by Joan Carroll Cruz

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Christianity www.newadvent.org/cathen/03712a.htm
Existence of God www.newadvent.org/cathen/06608b.htm
Resurrection of Jesus Christ www.newadvent.org/cathen/12789a.htm
The Ascension newadvent.org/cathen/01767b.htm
New Testament www.newadvent.org/cathen/14530a.htm
Socrates www.newadvent.org/cathen/14119a.htm
Plato www.newadvent.org/cathen/12159a.htm
Aristotle www.newadvent.org/cathen/01713a.htm
Rene Descartes www.newadvent.org/cathen/04744b.htm
Apologetics www.newadvent.org/cathen/01618a.htm
Blaise Pascal www.newadvent.org/cathen/11511a.htm
Constantine the Great www.newadvent.org/cathen/04295c.htm
The Bible www.newadvent.org/cathen/02543a.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.stillcatholic.com/CATHAtheists.htm
www.catholiceducation.org/articles/apologetics/ap0149.html (St. Thomas Aquinas' proofs of God)
jp.thomas.name/jesus/godsexistence.html (Summary of arguments for God)
www.ewtn.com/library/ANSWERS/GODIS.htm (Summa Theologica by St. Thomas Aquinas)
ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ15.HTM (Science, Design & the Cosmological Argument)
ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ75.HTM (Philosophy & Christianity)
www.catholiceducation.org/articles/apologetics/ap0002.html (Reasons to Believe)
www.cwo.com/~pentrack/catholic/apolo.html (Catholic apologetics)
enotalone.com/books.php?mode=books&topic=Christianity+-+Theology+-+Apologetics (lists books proving Christianity)

www.newadvent.org/summa/ (Summa Theologica: the theological masterpiece of St. Thomas Aquinas)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/14663b.htm (Life and Works of St. Thomas Aquinas)

www.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/gc.htm (Summa Contra Gentiles by St. Thomas Aquinas)

www.diopitt.org/tea_design.php (Intelligent Design or Mindless Evolution – 2005)

www.cathmed.org/publications/linacrequarterly/1998_02.html (Two Lourdes miracles and a Nobel Laureate)

www.envoymagazine.com/planetenvoy/Review-DaVinci-Part1.htm (critique of Da Vinci Code)

www.crisismagazine.com/september2003/feature1.htm (critique of Da Vinci Code)

SCRIPTURE

What does Scripture record about the moment Jesus died? Mt. 27: 50-54: And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

What does Scripture record about the Empty Tomb? Mt 28:1-20 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. Lo, I have told you." So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Hail!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

What does Scripture record about the Transfiguration of Jesus? Mt. 17: 1-8: And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Eli'jah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Eli'jah." He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with awe. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Rise, and have no fear." And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only

What does Scripture record about the Ascension? Lk. 24:51: While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. **Mark 16:19:** So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. **Acts 1:8-11** But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Sama'ria and to the end of the earth." And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

What does Scripture record about Pentecost? See Acts 2:1-12

What did Jesus say about Himself? See John 8:19, John 8:58-59, John 10:38.

What else is recorded about the status of Jesus by New Testament writers? Tit. 2:13, Col 2:9, Jn 1:1, Acts 20:28, Eph. 1:7

What does Scripture record about Jesus' promises to His Church? Mt 16:18-19, Mt 18:18, Jn 16:13, Lk 10:16, Mt. , Mt 28:20

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST?

See: www.catholic.com/library/god_christ.asp

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Next time you receive Communion, ask Jesus to come into your heart. Pray that your faith is increased.

Thank God for the wonders of nature He created. Thank Him for the people around you. Thank Him for sending His Son into the world to give his life as a Sacrifice so that our sins could be forgiven and we could have eternal life and happiness.

CHAPTER 3 – "Now I Get... Infallibility"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Where in the Bible does Jesus promise the Holy Spirit will guide the Church into all truth?
2. When is the pope granted this special protection by the Holy Spirit? When is he not?
3. The gift of infallible teaching is not granted to all one billion members of the Church. Through what vehicle does infallibility come to us?
4. What is the relationship of Sacred Scripture to Sacred Tradition?
5. The relationship of the Church's Magisterium to the Bible has often been compared to the relationship of the Supreme Court to the Constitution. What are the similarities in these relationships? What are the differences?
6. Why is it important to look at the tradition or history of Scriptural interpretation to understand Christ's true teaching?
7. If the Church had not been promised guidance into "all the truth," could we be sure about any doctrine at all?
8. Open your Bibles to Mt. 16: 18-19 and then to Mt 18:18. To whom does Jesus *first* grant his power to bind and loose? To whom does he later extend this power to? What is the relationship of Peter to the current pope? What is the relationship of the Twelve Apostles to our current bishops around the world?
9. What is the difference between Divine Law and the disciplines established by our Church to help us live out our Christian calling? Which can change and which cannot? Are we obliged to respect the authority of the Church on both Divine Law *and* disciplinary practices, such as Lenten fasting? (hint: yes!)

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Four Witnesses: The Early Church in Her Own Words: Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons by Rod Bennett

Apologia Pro Vita Sua by John Henry Newman

Upon this Rock: St Peter and the Primacy of Rome in Scripture and the Early Church by Stephen K. Ray

The Faith of Our Fathers by James Cardinal Gibbons

Treasure in Clay: The Autobiography of Fulton J. Sheen

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Infallibility www.newadvent.org/cathen/07790a.htm

The Pope www.newadvent.org/cathen/12260a.htm

Apostolic Succession www.newadvent.org/cathen/01641a.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_infallibility (Wikipedia)

www.chnetwork.org/journals/authority/authority_8.htm (Papal Infallibility)

www.chnetwork.org/daconv.htm (Apostolicity of the Church)

www.stillcatholic.com/PROTartics.htm (Articles defending the Church from Protestant claims)

ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ529.HTM (Development of Doctrine)

www.catholic.com/library/Papal_Infallibility.asp (Papal Infallibility)

www.catholic.com/library/church_papacy.asp (Church and Papacy)

SCRIPTURE

Where does the Bible say the Church teaching will be guided into ALL TRUTH by the Holy Spirit?

John 16:13: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into **all the truth**; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. (Words of Jesus)

John 14:26: But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

1 Tim 3:15: if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the **church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.**

Mt 28:19-20: 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,
20: teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, to the close of the age."**

Acts 15:28: For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: (Note Apostles speaking with the voice of the Holy-Spirit in its decisions in the Early Church)

1 John 2:27: his anointing teaches you about **everything, and is true**, and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abide in him. (Having been anointed by Holy Spirit, they will be taught everything)

THE DIVINE NATURE OF CHURCH TEACHING

What did the church fathers say about the Holy Spirit speaking through the church?

St. Irenaeus: "For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God, there the Church and every grace. The Spirit, however, is Truth." [Against Heresies 3, 24, 1] c. 200 A.D.

St. Irenaeus: ". . . the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although she is disseminated throughout the whole world, yet guarded it, as if she occupied but one house. She likewise believes these things just as if she had but one soul and one and the same heart; and harmoniously she proclaims them and teaches them and hands them down, as if she possessed but one mouth. For, while the languages of the world are diverse, nevertheless, the authority of the tradition is one and the same" (*Against Heresies* 1:10:2 [189 A.D.]).

Eusebius of Caesaria (leading Church historian of the Early Church): One new heresy arose after another, and the former ones always passed away, and now at one time, now at another, now in one way, now in other ways, were lost in ideas of various kinds and various forms. But the splendor of the catholic and only true Church, which is always the same, grew in magnitude and power, and reflected its piety and simplicity and freedom, and the modesty and purity of its inspired life and philosophy to every nation both of Greeks and of Barbarians. (*Ecclesiastical History* Book 4, Chapter 7) c. 4th century

St. Augustine of Hippo: "The Catholic Church is the work of divine providence, achieved through the prophecies of the prophets, through the Incarnation and the teaching of Christ, through the journeys of the Apostles, through the suffering, the crosses, the blood and death of the martyrs, through the admirable lives of the saints . . . When, then, we see so much help on God's part, so much progress and so much fruit, shall we hesitate to bury ourselves in the bosom of that Church? For starting from the apostolic chair down through succession of bishops, even unto the open confession of all mankind, it has possessed the crown of teaching authority." (*The Advantage of Believing*, 35)

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT INFALLIBILITY?

2051 The infallibility of the Magisterium of the Pastors extends to all the elements of doctrine, including moral doctrine, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, expounded, or observed.

889 In order to preserve the Church in the purity of the faith handed on by the apostles, Christ who is the Truth willed to confer on her a share in his own infallibility. By a "supernatural sense of faith" the People of God, under the guidance of the Church's living Magisterium, "unfailingly adheres to this faith."⁴¹⁷

890 The mission of the Magisterium is linked to the definitive nature of the covenant established by God with his people in Christ. It is this Magisterium's task to preserve God's people from deviations and defections and to guarantee them the objective possibility of professing the true faith without error. Thus, the pastoral duty of the Magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abides in the truth that liberates. To fulfill this service, Christ endowed the Church's shepherds with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals. The exercise of this charism takes several forms:

891 "The Roman Pontiff, head of the college of bishops, enjoys this infallibility in virtue of his office, when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful - who confirms his brethren in the faith he proclaims by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. . . . The infallibility promised to the Church is also present in the body of bishops when, together with Peter's successor, they exercise the supreme Magisterium," above all in an Ecumenical Council.⁴¹⁸ When the Church through its supreme Magisterium proposes a doctrine "for belief as being divinely revealed,"⁴¹⁹ and as the teaching of Christ, the definitions "must be adhered to with the obedience of faith."⁴²⁰ This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself.⁴²¹

892 Divine assistance is also given to the successors of the apostles, teaching in communion with the successor of Peter, and, in a particular way, to the bishop of Rome, pastor of the whole Church, when, without arriving at an infallible definition and without pronouncing in a "definitive manner," they propose in the exercise of the ordinary Magisterium a teaching that leads to better understanding of Revelation in matters of faith and morals. To this ordinary teaching the faithful "are to adhere to it with religious assent"⁴²² which, though distinct from the assent of faith, is nonetheless an extension of it.

80 "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal." Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own "always, to the close of the age".

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

How can we testify to the truth in our own communities?

If we ask the Holy Spirit, He will give us the courage to stand up for the truth on moral issues and issues of faith, and will help us do so in a charitable and compassionate manner.

When we receive the Sacraments, God's grace, poured on us, allows us to see the truth more clearly. Make a resolution to go to Confession and to receive Communion more frequently.

Pray for Pope Benedict XVI, who is invested with the promises made to Peter. Pray for all the bishops of the world, and for priests, that they may teach and live in truth.

CHAPTER 4 – "Now I Get... Confession"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Confession is officially known as the Sacrament of Penance and is sometimes called Reconciliation. What aspect of the Sacrament do each of these terms call to mind?
2. What powerful thing did Jesus do just before bestowing on his Apostles the awesome authority and power to forgive sins? (Hint: See John 20:22)
3. In the New Testament, which Apostle tells us that Jesus entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to the Church?
4. In what sacrament is a Christian's sins forgiven for the very first time?
5. According to 1 John 5:16, does more than one level of sin exist?
6. The Church only requires us to confess mortal sins, but we also receive great spiritual benefits by confessing venial sins. What are some of the benefits?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Confession – Its Fruitful Practice: With an Examination of Conscience by Benedictine Sisters of Adoration

Confession – A Little Book for the Reluctant by Msgr. Louis Gaston de Segur

HELPFUL ARTICLES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

The Sacrament of Penance www.newadvent.org/cathen/11618c.htm

Examination of Conscience www.newadvent.org/cathen/05675a.htm

Contrition www.newadvent.org/cathen/04337a.htm

Imperfect Contrition www.newadvent.org/cathen/02065a.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.usccb.org/catechism/quizzes/penance.htm (Penance Quiz)

www.osv.com/confession/ (How to Make a Good Confession)

www.cin.org/users/james/questions/q128.htm (What to do in the Confession booth)

www.osv.com/Confession/actcontrition.htm (An Act of Contrition)

www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm#1434 (Catechism on the Sacrament of Penance)

www.newadvent.org/summa/408400.htm (St. Thomas Aquinas on the Sacrament of Penance)

www.ewtn.com/library/DOCTRINE/PENANC.TXT (Sacrament of Penance in the Early Church)

www.cin.org/users/james/questions/q063.htm (Can a Non-Catholic Go to Confession?)

www.cin.org/users/james/files/penance.htm (Doing Penance)

www.cin.org/users/jgallegos/confess.htm (More Church Fathers)

www.catholic-pages.com/dir/confession.asp (More Resources on Confession)

www.ewtn.com/library/ANSWERS/GOTOCON.HTM (Why Go to Confession)

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT CONFESSION?

John 20:22-23 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

2 Cor 5:17-20 Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation**; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT CONFESSION?

St. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE (c. 250 AD) Of how much greater faith and salutary fear are they who...confess their sins to the priests of God in a straightforward manner and in sorrow, making an open declaration of conscience....Indeed, he but sins the more if, thinking that God is like man, he believes that he can escape the punishment of his crime by not openly admitting his crime....I beseech you, brethren, let everyone who has sinned confess his sin while he is still in this world, while his confession is still admissible, while the satisfaction and remission made through the priest are still pleasing before the Lord. (The Lapsed 28)

St. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM (c. 387 AD) Priests have received a power which God has given neither to angels nor to archangels. It was said to them: "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose, shall be loosed" [Matt 18:18]. Temporal rulers have indeed the power of binding; but they can only bind the body. Priests, in contrast, can bind with a bond which pertains to the soul itself and transcends the very heavens. Did [God] not give them all the powers of heaven? "Whose sins you shall forgive," he says, "they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" [John 20:23]. What greater power is there than this? The Father has given all judgment to the Son. And now I see the Son placing all this power in the hands of men [cf. Matt 9:8; 10:40; John 20:21]. (The Priesthood 3:5)

St. AUGUSTINE (c. 395 AD) When you shall have been baptized, keep to a good life in the commandments of God so that you may preserve your baptism to the very end. I do not tell you that you will live here without sin, but they are venial sins which this life is never without. Baptism was instituted for all sins. For light sins, without which we cannot live, prayer was instituted....But do not commit those sins on account of which you would have to be separated from the body of Christ. Perish the thought! For those whom you see doing penance have committed crimes, either adultery or some other enormities. That is why they are doing penance. If their sins were light, daily prayer would suffice to blot them out....In the Church, therefore, there are three ways in which sins are forgiven: in baptisms, in prayer, and in the greater humility of penance. (Sermon to Catechumens on the Creed 7:15; 8:16).

Additional Early Church quotes on Confession are listed at:

www.catholic.com/library/Confession.asp

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

1. There are many beautiful Act of Contrition prayers. Why not take the time to familiarize yourself with one of them and recite it nightly after a prayerful examination of conscience. Here is one Act of Contrition for starters
2. Fitting Confession into our busy lives take pre-planning. Check the parish Confession schedule well in advance, and make a note of it on your calendar. If your home parish does not offer times when you are available, check the Confession schedule at a neighboring parish. Confession schedules at most churches are listed with www.masstimes.org
3. Come up with a plan. If a sin is an ongoing problem for us, we must devise concrete ways to avoid it. How can we avoid the near occasions of sin? If we must spend time in a location or with a group of people that has contributed to our sinning in the past, pray intensely beforehand. Figure out an exit plan. If we are tempted to gossip, leave the room. Change the subject. Stuff our mouths with food. Do anything but sin. When we hurt others by deed or word, we offend the Lord and add to His Cross.
4. Upon leaving the Confession booth, thank God for his great mercy. We are forgiven for everything. We don't deserve it.

ACT OF CONTRITION (BEST SO SAY EACH NIGHT BEFORE GOING TO BED)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

CHAPTER 5 – "Now I Get... the Real Presence"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Which of the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – contains the famous Eucharistic discourse? What does Jesus say during that discourse?
2. According to the Biblical account, who believes what Jesus says about ? Who does not?
3. What happened at the Last Supper? What instructions did Jesus give?
4. What did Jesus say at the Last Supper that is still said at Mass today?
5. What is the difference between transubstantiation and consubstantiation?
6. What did the Jews in the Old Testament offer to God as sacrifice?
7. What replaced those sacrifices?
8. What perfect Sacrifice becomes present at the Mass?
9. Why do we call it the Mass of All Ages?
10. What did St. Paul say a person would be guilty of if he ate and drank the Body and Blood of Christ unworthily?
11. What did St. Paul mean when he said we must discern the body when we receive the Eucharist?
12. What did St. Paul mean when he said the Cup we bless and the bread we break are a participation in the Body and Blood of Christ?
13. People all around the globe receive the same exact Body and Blood of Christ. How does that make us connected to the entire Body of Christ?
14. The Old Testament Jews ate the Paschal Lamb (Exodus 12:8, 12:46). As part of the New Covenant, we eat the Lamb of God. What are the differences and similarities in the two Lambs?
15. Reflect on St. Paul's words: "For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed." (1 Cor 5:7)
16. Recall how Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread and fish for the thousands in the crowd. Reflect on how that miracle helped prepare the apostles for a greater miracle - Jesus would continually multiply His Body for all of us to share
17. How often do most Catholic churches have Mass?

SUGGESTED READING

How to Get the Most Out of the Eucharist by Michael Dubruiel. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor books 2005

The How-To Book of the Mass by Michael Dubruiel. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor books, 2002

Beginning Apologetics 3: How to Explain and Defend the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Farmington, NM: San Juan Catholic Seminars, 1999.

God Is Near Us: the Eucharist the Heart of Life by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003

The Lamb's Supper: The Mass As Heaven on Earth by Scott Hahn. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999.

The Mass of the Early Christians by Mike Aquilina. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Books, 2001

This is My Body by Mark P. Shea

Eucharistic Miracles by Joan Carroll Cruz. Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1987.

Praying the Presence of Our Lord: Prayers for Eucharistic Adoration Editor: Rev. Benedict J. Groeschel. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1999

The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist by Fr. James T. O'Connor San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1978

Worthy is the Lamb: The Biblical Roots of the Mass by Thomas Nash. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004.

Know Him in the Breaking of the Bread: A Guide to the Mass by Fr. Francis Randolph San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998

Our Splendid Eucharist: Reflections on Mass and Sacrament by Raymond Moloney, S.J. San Francisco: Ignatius Press

If Your Mind Wanders at Mass by Thomas Howard. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001 (new edition).

Adoration: Eucharistic Prayers throughout Church History, edited by Daniel Guernsey. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999

The Holy Eucharist by St. Alphonsus Liguori. New York: Alba House, 1994

Mass Confusion: The Dos and Don'ts of Catholic Worship by James Akin. El Cajon, Ca.: Catholic Answers, Inc., 1999

The Most Blessed Sacrament (a booklet by Fr. Stephano Manelli, O.F.M)

The Wonders of the Mass (a booklet by Paul O'Sullivan, O.P.)

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE OLD CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA.

www.newadvent.org/cathen/05573a.htm (The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/10006a.htm (Sacrifice of the Mass)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/03255c.htm (Canon of the Mass)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/05713a.htm (Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/05584a.htm (The Blessed Eucharist as a Sacrament)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/11279a.htm (Holy Orders)

HELPFUL WEBSITES

www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/father/a5.html (The Real Presence Association)
www.catholicapologetics.org/ap060500.htm (The Eucharist: the Lord's Supper)
www.catholic.com/library/Institution_of_the_Mass.asp (The Institution of the Mass)
<http://www.ewtn.com/library/DOCTRINE/MODMISC.TXT> (Modern Misconceptions about the Eucharist)
www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=243 (Modern Misconceptions about the Eucharist)
<http://www.osv.com/eucharist/> (Eucharist Links)

HELPFUL MEDIA

Audiotapes: The Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist – Live (a set of 6 tapes by Fr. Regis Scanlon). St. Joseph's Communications, West Covina, CA

SCRIPTURE

The gospel of John contains Jesus' Eucharistic discourse, where Jesus promises he will give us his own flesh and blood to eat and drink.

(John 6:35-71)

35: Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst

36: But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

37: All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out.

38: For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me;

39: and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day

40: For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

41: The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven."

42: They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

43: Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves

44: No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

45: It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me

46: Not that any one has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father

47: Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life

48: I am the bread of life

49: Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died

50: This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die.

51: I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

52: The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

53: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you;

54: he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day

55: For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

56: He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him

57: As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.

58: This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever."

59: This he said in the synagogue, as he taught at Caper'na-um.

60: Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"

61: But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, "Do you take offense at this?"

62: Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before?

63: It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

64: But there are some of you that do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him

65: And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father

66: After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him.

67: Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?"

68: Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life;

69: and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

70: Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

71: He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was to betray him.

WHAT ELSE DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE EUCHARIST?

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:23-29)

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.

St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 10:16)

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

CHURCH FATHERS SAY ON THE REAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

St. Ignatius of Antioch (110AD) “[heretics] abstain from Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus of our Savior Jesus Christ...” (Letter to Smyrnaeans 6,2)

St. Justin Martyr (150 A.D.): “not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but...as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nourished, is both the Flesh and Blood of that incarnated Jesus.” (First Apology 66, 20)

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (195 AD): “He [Jesus] has declared the cup, a part of his creation, to be His own Blood, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, He has established as His Own Body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.” (Against Heresies 5,2,2.)

St Cyril of Jerusalem (350 A.D.): “He himself, therefore, having declared and said of the bread, ‘This is My Body,’ who will dare any longer to doubt? And when He Himself has affirmed and said, ‘This is My Blood,’ who can ever hesitate and say it is not His Blood? (Catechetical Lectures: Mystagogic 4,22,1.)

St Cyril of Jerusalem (350 A.D.): “Do not, therefore, regard the bread and wine as simply that, for they are, according to the Master’s declarations, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest to you the other, let faith make you firm. Do not judge in this matter by taste, but be fully assured by faith, not doubting that you have been deemed worthy of the Body and Blood of Christ.” Ibid. 4,22,6

St. Ignatius of Antioch (100 AD) the Eucharist is "the medicine of immortality and the antidote, so that we do not die, but live forever in Jesus Christ"

St. John Chrysostom: "You envy the opportunity of the woman who touched the vestments of Jesus, of the sinful woman who washed His feet with her tears, of the women of Galilee who had the happiness of following Him in His pilgrimages, of the Apostles and disciples who conversed with Him familiarly, of the people of the time who listened to the words of grace and salvation which came forth from His lips. You call happy those who saw Him...But, come to the altar and you will see Him, you will touch Him, you will give to Him holy kisses, you will wash Him with your tears, you will carry Him within you like Mary Most Holy."

For more Church Fathers on the Real Presence, see
www.catholic.com/library/Real_Presence.asp

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

1. The Mass is the strongest prayer and the only perfect Sacrifice that can be offered up to God. The Lord is truly present, and so is the Sacrifice He made on Calvary. Think of ways to prepare your heart. Make your walk or drive to Mass a quiet, prayerful time. Perhaps, turn off the radio. Prepare your heart for the entrance of the Lord. Call to mind any special intentions for which you may want to offer up Mass. Sick friend? Souls in purgatory? Peace?
2. Church regulations require us to fast for one hour before receiving Communion, but consider fasting an extra amount of time as a gift to the Lord
3. Be sure to arrive on time and dress properly for Mass. Perhaps set your alarm earlier and figure out what you'll wear ahead of time.
4. Pay special attention during the consecration. Call to mind the painful sacrifice that Jesus went through for us. It is Christ's death that we are proclaiming. "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Cor. 11:26)
5. If we have a mortal sin on our soul, we must go to Confession before we can receive Communion again
6. Remember to bow your head before the Lord before approaching the priest for Communion.
7. Make a concerted effort to make it to Mass one extra day per week. If you only go on Sundays, try a Monday also. Or a Friday. Mass schedules at most U.S. Catholic churches are listed with www.masstimes.org.
8. Many parishes have exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Find out which parish near you has it and stop in for Adoration of the Host. The Lord will appreciate any time you can spend with Him, but remember that Holy Hour is so named because of Jesus' plea for his friends to stay with him just one hour in the Garden of Gethsemane. When Jesus found the disciples sleeping, he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mt. 26:40-41)

CHAPTER 6 – "Now I Get... Confirmation"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Which Sacrament does Confirmation complete?
2. In the Early Church, Confirmation had many names: unction, chrism, and sealing, to name a few. Give one more. (Hint: see Hebrews 6:2 and Acts 19:5-6)
3. Who generally administers the sacrament of Confirmation, and what is the person's connection to the Apostles?
4. Which Sacrament should those about to receive Confirmation receive in order to prepare themselves for entrance of the Holy Spirit?
5. What are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive in Confirmation?
6. What substance is used to anoint the forehead of those receiving Confirmation?
7. In the Bible, what did Christians receive first – Baptism or Confirmation? (See Acts 19:5-6)
8. Three of the seven sacraments can never be received more than once in a lifetime. Which three?
9. What happened on Pentecost?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Why Confirmation? Why Be Catholic? by Daniel L. Pilarczyk. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2003.

Nurturing Young Catholics: A Guide for Confirmation Sponsors (And Other Caring Adults) by Joseph Moore, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995.

I Have Chosen You – Leader's Guide: A Six Month Confirmation Program for Emerging Young Adults by Joseph Moore

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Confirmation www.newadvent.org/cathen/04215b.htm

St. Thomas Aquinas on Confirmation www.newadvent.org/summa/407200.htm

Holy Spirit www.newadvent.org/cathen/07409a.htm

Chrism www.newadvent.org/cathen/03696b.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a2.htm#1285 (Catechism on Confirmation)

www.catholic.com/library/confirmation.asp (Confirmation in the Bible)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/04215b.htm (St. Thomas Aquinas on Confirmation)

www.cin.org/users/james/ebooks/master/trent/tsacr-c.htm (The Catechism of Trent)

www.cin.org/users/james/ebooks/master/pius/psacr-c.htm (Catechism of St. Pius X)

SCRIPTURE

Acts 19:5-6 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Acts 8:14-21 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Sama'ria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." But Peter said to him, "Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

2 Cor. 1:21-22 But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee

Eph. 1:13 In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT CONFIRMATION?

1285 Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.⁸⁹ For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."⁹⁰

I CONFIRMATION IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

1286 In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission.⁹¹ The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his baptism by John was the sign that this was he who was to come, the Messiah, the Son of God.⁹² He was conceived of the Holy Spirit; his whole life and his whole mission are carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit whom the Father gives him "without measure."⁹³

1287 This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to *the whole messianic people*.⁹⁴ On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit,⁹⁵ a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost.⁹⁶ Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim "the mighty works of God," and Peter declared this outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age.⁹⁷ Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn.⁹⁸

1288 "From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the *Letter to the Hebrews* the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church."⁹⁹

1289 Very early, the better to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, an anointing with perfumed oil (*chrism*) was added to the laying on of hands. This anointing highlights the name "Christian," which means "anointed" and derives from that of Christ himself whom God "anointed with the Holy Spirit."¹⁰⁰ This rite of anointing has continued ever since, in both East and West. For this reason the Eastern Churches call this sacrament *Chrismation*, anointing with chrism, or *myron* which means "chrism." In the West, the term *Confirmation* suggests that this sacrament both confirms and strengthens baptismal grace.

Two traditions: East and West

1290 In the first centuries Confirmation generally comprised one single celebration with Baptism, forming with it a "double sacrament," according to the expression of St. Cyprian. Among other reasons, the multiplication of infant baptisms all through the year, the increase of rural parishes, and the growth of dioceses often prevented the bishop from being present at all baptismal celebrations. In the West the desire to reserve the completion of Baptism to the bishop caused the temporal separation of the two

sacraments. The East has kept them united, so that Confirmation is conferred by the priest who baptizes. But he can do so only with the "myron" consecrated by a bishop.¹⁰¹

1291 A custom of the Roman Church facilitated the development of the Western practice: a double anointing with sacred chrism after Baptism. The first anointing of the neophyte on coming out of the baptismal bath was performed by the priest; it was completed by a second anointing on the forehead of the newly baptized by the bishop.¹⁰² The first anointing with sacred chrism, by the priest, has remained attached to the baptismal rite; it signifies the participation of the one baptized in the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ. If Baptism is conferred on an adult, there is only one post-baptismal anointing, that of Confirmation.

1292 The practice of the Eastern Churches gives greater emphasis to the unity of Christian initiation. That of the Latin Church more clearly expresses the communion of the new Christian with the bishop as guarantor and servant of the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of his Church, and hence the connection with the apostolic origins of Christ's Church.

II. THE SIGNS AND THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

1293 In treating the rite of Confirmation, it is fitting to consider the sign of *anointing* and what it signifies and imprints: a spiritual *seal*.

Anointing, in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, is rich in meaning: oil is a sign of abundance and joy;¹⁰³ it cleanses (anointing before and after a bath) and limbers (the anointing of athletes and wrestlers); oil is a sign of healing, since it is soothing to bruises and wounds;¹⁰⁴ and it makes radiant with beauty, health, and strength.

1294 Anointing with oil has all these meanings in the sacramental life. The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort. The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation and ordination is the sign of consecration. By Confirmation Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off "the aroma of Christ."¹⁰⁵

1295 By this anointing the confirmand receives the "mark," the *seal* of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object.¹⁰⁶ Hence soldiers were marked with their leader's seal and slaves with their master's. A seal authenticates a juridical act or document and occasionally makes it secret.¹⁰⁷

1296 Christ himself declared that he was marked with his Father's seal.¹⁰⁸ Christians are also marked with a seal: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee."¹⁰⁹ This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the great eschatological trial.¹¹⁰

The celebration of Confirmation

1297 *The consecration of the sacred chrism* is an important action that precedes the celebration of Confirmation, but is in a certain way a part of it. It is the bishop who, in the course of the Chrism Mass of Holy Thursday, consecrates the sacred chrism for his whole diocese. In some Eastern Churches this consecration is even reserved to the patriarch:

The liturgy of Antioch expresses the epiclesis for the consecration of the sacred chrism (myron) in this way: "[Father . . . send your Holy Spirit] on us and on this oil which is before us and consecrate it, so that it may be for all who are anointed and marked with it holy myron, priestly myron, royal myron, anointing with gladness, clothing with light, a cloak of salvation, a spiritual gift, the sanctification of souls and bodies, imperishable happiness, the indelible seal, a buckler of faith, and a fearsome helmet against all the works of the adversary."

1298 When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, as is the case in the Roman Rite, the Liturgy of Confirmation begins with the renewal of baptismal promises and the profession of faith by the confirmands. This clearly shows that Confirmation follows Baptism.¹¹¹ When adults are baptized, they immediately receive Confirmation and participate in the Eucharist.¹¹²

1299 In the Roman Rite the bishop extends his hands over the whole group of the confirmands. Since the time of the apostles this gesture has signified the gift of the Spirit. The bishop invokes the outpouring of the Spirit in these words:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life.

Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide.

Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.

Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

1300 The *essential rite* of the sacrament follows. In the Latin rite, "the sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: '*Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*' [Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit]."¹¹⁴ In the Eastern Churches of Byzantine rite, after a prayer of epiclesis, the more significant parts of the body are anointed with myron: forehead, eyes, nose, ears, lips, chest, back, hands, and feet. Each anointing is accompanied by the formula Σφραγίς δωρεάς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου (*Signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*): "*the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.*"¹¹⁵

1301 The sign of peace that concludes the rite of the sacrament signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful.¹¹⁶

III. THE EFFECTS OF CONFIRMATION

1302 It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

1303 From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";¹¹⁷
- it unites us more firmly to Christ;
- it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
- it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;¹¹⁸

- it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross:¹¹⁹

Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God's presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts.¹²⁰

1304 Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an *indelible spiritual mark*, the "character," which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness.¹²¹

1305 This "character" perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and "the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (*quasi Ex officio*)."¹²²

IV. WHO CAN RECEIVE THIS SACRAMENT

1306 Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation.¹²³ Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that "the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time,"¹²⁴ for without Confirmation and Eucharist, Baptism is certainly valid and efficacious, but Christian initiation remains incomplete.

1307 For centuries, Latin custom has indicated "the age of discretion" as the reference point for receiving Confirmation. But in danger of death children should be confirmed even if they have not yet attained the age of discretion.¹²⁵

1308 Although Confirmation is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity," we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need "ratification" to become effective. St. Thomas reminds us of this:

Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of Wisdom says: "For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years. "Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood."¹²⁶

1309 *Preparation* for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit - his actions, his gifts, and his biddings - in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.¹²⁷

1310 To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.¹²⁸

1311 Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a *sponsor*. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.¹²⁹

V. THE MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION

1312 The *original minister* of Confirmation is the bishop.¹³⁰

In the East, ordinarily the priest who baptizes also immediately confers Confirmation in one and the same celebration. But he does so with sacred chrism consecrated by the patriarch or the bishop, thus expressing the apostolic unity of the Church whose bonds are strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation. In the Latin Church, the same discipline applies to the Baptism of adults or to the reception into full communion with the Church of a person baptized in another Christian community that does not have valid Confirmation.¹³¹

1313 *In the Latin Rite*, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop.¹³² If the need arises, the bishop may grant the faculty of administering Confirmation to priests,¹³³ although it is fitting that he confer it himself, mindful that the celebration of Confirmation has been temporally separated from Baptism for this reason. Bishops are the successors of the apostles. They have received the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The administration of this sacrament by them demonstrates clearly that its effect is to unite those who receive it more closely to the Church, to her apostolic origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ.

1314 If a Christian is in danger of death, any priest can give him Confirmation.¹³⁴ Indeed the Church desires that none of her children, even the youngest, should depart this world without having been perfected by the Holy Spirit with the gift of Christ's fullness

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT CONFIRMATION?

St. Cyprian of Carthage: "It is necessary for him that has been baptized also to be anointed, so that by his having received chrism, that is, the anointing, he can be the anointed of God and have in him the grace of Christ" (Letters 7:2 [A.D. 253])

St. Cyprian of Carthage: "Some say in regard to those who were baptized in Samaria that when the apostles Peter and John came there only hands were imposed on them so that they might receive the Holy Spirit, and that they were not re-baptized. But we see, dearest brother, that this situation in no way pertains to the present case. Those in Samaria who had believed had believed in the true faith, and it was by the deacon Philip, whom those same apostles had sent there, that they had been baptized inside—in the Church. . . . Since, then, they had already received a legitimate and ecclesiastical baptism, it was not necessary to baptize them again. Rather, that only which was lacking was done by Peter and John. The prayer having been made over them and hands having been imposed upon them, the Holy Spirit was invoked and was poured out upon them. This is even now the practice among us, so that those who are baptized in the Church then are brought to the prelates of the Church; through our prayer and the imposition of hands, they receive the Holy Spirit and are perfected with the seal of the Lord" (ibid., 73[72]:9). "[A]re not hands, in the name of the same Christ, laid upon the baptized persons among them, for the reception of the Holy Spirit?" (ibid., 74[73]:5).

"[O]ne is not born by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit, even as it happened in the first man Adam. For first God formed him, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. For the Spirit cannot be received, unless he who receives first has an existence. But . . . the birth of Christians is in baptism" (ibid., 74[73]:7).

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "After you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given chrism, the antitype of that with which Christ was anointed, and this is the Holy Spirit. But beware of supposing that this is ordinary ointment. For just as the bread of the Eucharist after the invocation of the Holy Spirit is simple bread no longer, but the body of Christ, so also this ointment is no longer plain ointment, nor, so to speak, common, after the invocation. Further, it is the gracious gift of Christ, and it is made fit for the imparting of his Godhead by the coming of the Holy Spirit. This ointment is symbolically applied to your forehead and to your other senses; while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the holy and life-giving Spirit. Just as Christ, after his baptism, and the coming upon him of the Holy Spirit, went forth and defeated the adversary, so also with you after holy baptism and the mystical chrism, having put on the panoply of the Holy Spirit, you are to withstand the power of the adversary and defeat him, saying, 'I am able to do all things in Christ, who strengthens me'" (Catechetical Lectures, 21:1, 3–4 [A.D. 350]).

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "[David says,] 'You have anointed my head with oil.' With oil he anointed your head, your forehead, in the God-given sign of the cross, so that you may become that which is engraved on the seal, 'a holy thing of the Lord'" (ibid., 22:7).

For more Early Church writings on Confirmation, see
<http://www.catholic.com/library/Confirmation.asp>

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

1. If you are preparing for the one-time Sacrament of Confirmation, reception of the Sacrament of Penance and intense prayer are necessary to prayer you for coming of the Holy Spirit into you. Are you ready to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ?
2. If you are planning to take on the name of a saint for your Confirmation, be sure to do some reading and research on a variety of holy men or women. You can read about hundreds of saints at www.catholic.org/saints/stindex.php or www.catholic-forum.com/saints/patron02.htm. You might also consider a trip to the library. One good saints book is the Encyclopedia of Saints (published by Our Sunday Visitor).
3. Think long and hard before you select your Confirmation sponsor. Your sponsor must be the same gender as you and must already have been confirmed. The sponsor should be at least 16 years old, serious about his or her Catholic faith, and must live a good life. To emphasize the unity of Baptism and Confirmation, the Church recommends selecting your Baptismal godmother or godfather as sponsor if he or she fulfills all the above requirements.
4. Remember what our Catechism teaches: "Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit - his actions, his gifts, and his biddings - in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmation.
5. If you have already received the Sacrament of Confirmation, how can you make greater use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit? How can you better profess your faith publicly? Do your talents or interests match up with any ministries of your parish? Have you invited anyone to Mass or Confession lately?

CHAPTER 7 – "Now I Get... Heaven"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Every member of the elect goes to heaven. Is it possible to go straight to heaven at the moment of death? If one still has sin on his or her soul, what will happen to the soul prior to entering heaven?
2. Are there people in heaven already? Besides humans, who else is in heaven? Do angels have physical bodies?
3. When will all human souls in heaven be reunited with their bodies? Does anyone already have his or her body in heaven?
4. Where on Earth do we get a true taste of heaven? (Hint: when we come in contact with Jesus)
5. What are some things we will be able to do in heaven that we cannot do on Earth? Is it possible to sin in heaven?
6. What is the Beatific Vision?
7. Salvation is by grace alone, and grace is a free gift that we first get in Baptism. Is it possible to lose grace? How? Will God offer it back to us if we lose it?
8. Will some people be closer to God than others in heaven?
9. Can those who are now in heaven help us on Earth?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Interior Castle by St. Teresa of Avila

Sermons of St. Alphonsus Liguori by St. Alphonsus De Liguori

The Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Hell, Heaven by the Rev. Marin Von Cochem

The Story of a Soul: Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux

The Theology of the Body by Pope John Paul II

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Heaven www.newadvent.org/cathen/07170a.htm

Particular Judgment www.newadvent.org/cathen/08550a.htm

Beatific Vision www.newadvent.org/cathen/02364a.htm

Angels www.newadvent.org/cathen/01476d.htm

Guardian Angel www.newadvent.org/cathen/07049c.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.catholic-forum.com/saints/ncd03850.htm (A definition of heaven)

www.stillcatholic.com/CATHHeaven.htm (Questions on heaven answered)

www.cin.org/users/james/ebooks/master/trent/tcreed12.htm (The Catechism of Trent)

www.cin.org/users/james/ebooks/master/baltimore/bcreed12.htm (Baltimore Catechism)

www.catholiceducation.org/articles/sexuality/se0055.html (John Paul II's Theology of the Body)

SCRIPTURE

1 Cor 2:9 But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"

1 Cor 13: 8-13 Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love

Mt 18:10 See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.

1 Jn. 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Jn 14:1-4 "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going."

Mt. 7:13-14 Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

2 Cor. 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit

Isaiah 25:8-9: He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands...

Revelation 22:5 And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever

WHAT DID CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT HEAVEN?

St. Augustine of Hippo: "But the many mansions point to the different grades of merit in that one eternal life. For there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory; and so also the resurrection of the dead. The saints, like the stars in the sky, obtain in the kingdom different mansions of diverse degrees of brightness; but on account of that one penny no one is cut off from the kingdom; and God will be all in all in such a way, that, as God is love, love will bring it about that what is possessed by each will be common to all. For in this way every one really possesses it, when he loves to see in another what he has not himself. There will not, therefore, be any envying amid this diversity of brightness, since in all of them will be reigning the unity of love. (Tractate 67 [John 14:1-3])

See full tract at www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701067.htm

See www.cin.org/users/jgallegos/heaven.htm

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT HEAVEN?

1042 At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. After the universal judgment, the righteous will reign for ever with Christ, glorified in body and soul. The universe itself will be renewed:

The Church . . . will receive her perfection only in the glory of heaven, when will come the time of the renewal of all things. At that time, together with the human race, the universe itself, which is so closely related to man and which attains its destiny through him, will be perfectly re-established in Christ.⁶³¹

1043 Sacred Scripture calls this mysterious renewal, which will transform humanity and the world, "new heavens and a new earth."⁶³² It will be the definitive realization of God's plan to bring under a single head "all things in [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth."⁶³³

1044 In this new universe, the heavenly Jerusalem, God will have his dwelling among men.⁶³⁴ "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."⁶³⁵

1045 *For man*, this consummation will be the final realization of the unity of the human race, which God willed from creation and of which the pilgrim Church has been "in the nature of sacrament."⁶³⁶ Those who are united with Christ will form the community of the redeemed, "the holy city" of God, "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."⁶³⁷ She will not be wounded any longer by sin, stains, self-love, that destroy or wound the earthly community.⁶³⁸ The beatific vision, in which God opens himself in an inexhaustible way to the elect, will be the ever-flowing well-spring of happiness, peace, and mutual communion.

1046 *For the cosmos*, Revelation affirms the profound common destiny of the material world and man:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God . . . in hope because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay. . . . We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.⁶³⁹

1047 The visible universe, then, is itself destined to be transformed, "so that the world itself, restored to its original state, facing no further obstacles, should be at the service of the just," sharing their glorification in the risen Jesus Christ.⁶⁴⁰

1048 "We know neither the moment of the consummation of the earth and of man, nor the way in which the universe will be transformed. The form of this world, distorted by sin, is passing away, and we are taught that God is preparing a new dwelling and a new earth in which righteousness dwells, in which happiness will fill and surpass all the desires of peace arising in the hearts of men."⁶⁴¹

1049 "Far from diminishing our concern to develop this earth, the expectancy of a new earth should spur us on, for it is here that the body of a new human family grows, foreshadowing in some way the age which is to come. That is why, although we must be careful to distinguish earthly progress clearly from the increase of the kingdom of Christ, such progress is of vital concern to the kingdom of God, insofar as it can contribute to the better ordering of human society."⁶⁴²

1050 "When we have spread on earth the fruits of our nature and our enterprise . . . according to the command of the Lord and in his Spirit, we will find them once again, cleansed this time from the stain of sin, illuminated and transfigured, when Christ presents to his Father an eternal and universal kingdom."⁶⁴³ God will then be "all in all" in eternal life:⁶⁴⁴

True and subsistent life consists in this: the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, pouring out his heavenly gifts on all things without exception. Thanks to his mercy, we too, men that we are, have received the inalienable promise of eternal life.⁶⁴⁵

IN BRIEF . . . HEAVEN

1023 Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face:⁵⁹⁸

By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints . . . and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died, . . . or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death, . . .) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment - and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven - have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature.⁵⁹⁹

1024 This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity - this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed - is called "heaven." Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.

1025 To live in heaven is "to be with Christ." The elect live "in Christ,"⁶⁰⁰ but they retain, or rather find, their true identity, their own name.⁶⁰¹

For life is to be with Christ; where Christ is, there is life, there is the kingdom.⁶⁰²

1026 By his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has "opened" heaven to us. The life of the blessed consists in the full and perfect possession of the fruits of the redemption accomplished by Christ. He makes partners in his heavenly glorification those who have believed in him and remained faithful to his will. Heaven is the blessed community of all who are perfectly incorporated into Christ.

1027 This mystery of blessed communion with God and all who are in Christ is beyond all understanding and description. Scripture speaks of it in images: life, light, peace, wedding feast, wine of the kingdom, the Father's house, the heavenly Jerusalem, paradise: "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."⁶⁰³

1028 Because of his transcendence, God cannot be seen as he is, unless he himself opens up his mystery to man's immediate contemplation and gives him the capacity for it. The Church calls this contemplation of God in his heavenly glory "the beatific vision": How great will your glory and happiness be, to be allowed to see God, to be honored with sharing the joy of salvation and eternal light with Christ your Lord and God, . . . to delight in the joy of immortality in the Kingdom of heaven with the righteous and God's friends.⁶⁰⁴

1029 In the glory of heaven the blessed continue joyfully to fulfill God's will in relation to other men and to all creation. Already they reign with Christ; with him "they shall reign for ever and ever."⁶⁰⁵

1051 Every man receives his eternal recompense in his immortal soul from the moment of his death in a particular judgment by Christ, the judge of the living and the dead.

1052 "We believe that the souls of all who die in Christ's grace . . . are the People of God beyond death. On the day of resurrection, death will be definitively conquered, when these souls will be reunited with their bodies" (Paul VI, *CPG* § 28).

1053 "We believe that the multitude of those gathered around Jesus and Mary in Paradise forms the Church of heaven, where in eternal blessedness they see God as he is and where they are also, to various degrees, associated with the holy angels in the divine governance exercised by Christ in glory, by interceding for us and helping our weakness by their fraternal concern" (Paul VI, *CPG* § 29).

2795 . . . the Father's house is our homeland. Sin has exiled us from the land of the covenant,⁵⁶ but conversion of heart enables us to return to the Father, to heaven.⁵⁷ In Christ, then, heaven and earth are reconciled, for the Son alone "descended from heaven" and causes us to ascend there with him, by his Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension.
Virginity for the sake of the Kingdom

1618 Christ is the center of all Christian life. The bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social.¹¹³ From the very beginning of the Church there have been men and women who have renounced the great good of marriage to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to be intent on the things of the Lord, to seek to please him, and to go out to meet the Bridegroom who is coming.¹¹⁴ Christ himself has invited certain persons to follow him in this way of life, of which he remains the model:

"For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."¹¹⁵

1619 Virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is an unfolding of baptismal grace, a powerful sign of the supremacy of the bond with Christ and of the ardent expectation of his return, a sign which also recalls that marriage is a reality of this present age which is passing away.¹¹⁶

1620 Both the sacrament of Matrimony and virginity for the Kingdom of God come from the Lord himself. It is he who gives them meaning and grants them the grace which is indispensable for living them out in conformity with his will.¹¹⁷ Esteem of virginity for the sake of the kingdom¹¹⁸ and the Christian understanding of marriage are inseparable, and they reinforce each other:

Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be truly good. The most excellent good is something even better than what is admitted to be good.¹¹⁹

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

The purpose of our lives is to prepare for eternal union with Jesus. What distractions in this world keep us from putting Jesus first? Do we sometimes care what other people think about us more than we care what we are doing to Jesus? Rewatch the movie "The Passion" as a reminder of what Jesus went through for us. Remember, prayer, acts of charity, penance and reception of the sacraments are good for the soul. They allow God to transform our souls into something more worthy of His presence.

Remember, the senses we now possess do not have the capacity to appreciate or even envision the wonders that await us in heaven. The glory that awaits us is hardly worth forfeiting for the temporary and fleeting pleasures and temptations on this Earth.

CHAPTER 8 – "Now I Get... Purgatory"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What did St. Thomas Aquinas say about purgatory?
2. What did St. Augustine say about purgatory?
3. What did C.S. Lewis say about purgatory?
4. Why do some people suffer more in purgatory than others?
5. Where do all souls in purgatory wind up in the end?
6. Which book of the Old Testament encourages prayers for the dead?
7. What prayer do Jews say for the good of deceased souls? What is the customary length of time for saying the prayer?
8. How will purgatory benefit our souls eternally?
9. Who do you think would have a harsher sentence in purgatory - a person who committed heinous crimes his whole life and repented a moment before dying - or a person who committed venial sins his whole life, but who spent many hours each week praying, helping the poor, doing penance and attending daily Mass?
10. What is the difference between a partial indulgence and a plenary indulgence?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Treatise on Purgatory by St. Catherine of Genoa

How to Avoid Purgatory (a \$2 booklet by Fr. Paul O'Sullivan)

Purgatory: Explained by the Lives and the Legends of the Saints by Fr. F.X. Schoupe, S.J.

Charity for the Suffering Souls: An Explanation of the Catholic Doctrine of Purgatory by Fr. John A. Nageleisen

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Purgatory www.newadvent.org/cathen/12575a.htm

Prayers for the Dead www.newadvent.org/cathen/04653a.htm

Indulgences www.newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

<http://www.stillcatholic.com/CATHPurg.htm> (Questions about purgatory answered)

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/SPIRIT/CATPUR.TXT> (Treatise on purgatory by St. Catherine of Genoa)

<http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/stc35001.htm> (Treatise on purgatory)

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/SPIRIT/AVOIDPRG.TXT> (How to Avoid Purgatory)

<http://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/purga1.htm> (article by Fr. William G. Most)

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Atrium/8410/get-clean.html> (Eastern Orthodox Belief in purgator

History of Purgatory

www.ewtn.com/library/ANSWERS/PURGBAS.htm (Doctrine of Purgatory Explained)

www.ourladywarriors.org/indulge/plenary.htm (Indulgences approved by the pope)

SCRIPTURE

2 Maccabees 12:44-46 For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.

1 Cor 3:14-15 If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire

Mt. 12:32 And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

1 Cor 15: 29 Otherwise, what do people mean by being baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

Heb 12:14 Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT PURGATORY AND HELPING THE DEAD?

St. Augustine: There is an ecclesiastical discipline, as the faithful know, when the names of the martyrs are read aloud in that place at the altar of God, where prayer is not offered for them. Prayer, however, is offered for other dead who are remembered. It is wrong to pray for a martyr, to whose prayers we ought ourselves be commended (Sermons 159:1 [411 A.D.]).

St. Augustine: Temporal punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by some after death, by some both here and hereafter, but all of them before that last and strictest judgment. But not all who suffer temporal punishments after death will come to eternal punishments, which are to follow after that judgment (The City of God 21:13 [A.D. 419]).

St. Augustine: That there should be some fire even after this life is not incredible, and it can be inquired into and either be discovered or left hidden whether some of the faithful may be saved, some more slowly and some more quickly in the greater or lesser degree in which they loved the good things that perish, through a certain purgatorial fire (Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Charity 18:69 [421 A.D.]).

St. Ambrose of Milan: Give perfect rest to thy servant Theodosius, that rest which thou hast prepared for thy saints... I have loved him, and therefore will I follow him into the land of the living; nor will I leave him until by tears and prayers I shall lead him wither his merits summon him, unto the holy mountain of the Lord (Funeral Sermon of Theodosius 36-37 [A.D. 395]).

St. John Chrysostom: Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice [Job 1:5), why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them (Homilies on First Corinthians 41:5 (A.D. 392)).

Origen: If a man departs this life with lighter faults, he is condemned to fire which burns away the lighter materials, and prepares the soul for the kingdom of God, where nothing defiled may enter.

More Church Fathers at www.holysoulscrusade.org/early-fathers.html

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT PURGATORY?

1030 All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

1031 The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.⁶⁰⁶ The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:⁶⁰⁷

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.⁶⁰⁸

1032 This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin."⁶⁰⁹ From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.⁶¹⁰ The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.⁶¹¹

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Make it a point before going to bed each night to say a prayer for a loved one who might be suffering in purgatory. If you are watching the news, perhaps say a little prayer for the accident victims or victims of crimes who have died. Pray for the souls of deceased soldiers and victims of natural disasters. Pray for souls in purgatory who have no one to pray for them. The Sacrifice of the Mass can provide a powerful help for souls. Any little sacrifice you make during the day can be offered up for souls in order to expedite their entrance into heaven.

CHAPTER 9 – "Now I Get... Judgment Day"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How will you know when it is Judgment Day? What will you see in the sky? Will everybody in the world know it is Judgment Day?
2. What are some things that must occur before Judgment Day?
3. What will Jesus say to all of us on Judgment Day?
4. What will happen to the Earth as we know it on Judgment Day?
5. What is the difference between the particular judgment and Final Judgment (General Judgment)?
6. Will people who are alive on Judgment Day have to die before going to heaven or hell?
7. One of the following will cease to exist starting on Judgment Day. Which is it? Hell, heaven or purgatory?
8. For His Second Coming, will Jesus look different than when he walked the Earth in the first century? How so?
9. According to the Bible, what are a few things that will determine how we are judged?
10. Among the elect, will some people receive greater rewards in heaven than others?
11. Among the damned, will some people receive worse punishments than others?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Will Catholics Be Left Behind? by Carl Olson

The Rapture Trap by Paul Thigpen

Salvation Controversy by Jimmy Akin

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

General Judgment www.newadvent.org/cathen/08552a.htm

Anti-Christ www.newadvent.org/cathen/01559a.htm

Millennium www.newadvent.org/cathen/10307a.htm

Sin www.newadvent.org/cathen/14004b.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120120.htm> (St. Augustine's City of God, Chapter on Last Judgment)

www.catholic.com/library/last_things.asp (Last Things)

SCRIPTURE

What does the Bible say about Judgment Day?

Mt 12:36 I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter

Mt 24-31 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of man. Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Mt 25: 31-46 When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Acts 17:30-31 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all men by raising him from the dead

Lk 12: 2-3 Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

2 Peter 3: 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace

Rev. 11:11-15 But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up hither!" And in the sight of their foes they went up to heaven in a cloud. And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe is soon to come. Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Romans 14:12-13 So each of us shall give account of himself to God. Then let us no more pass judgment on one another

Daniel 12:1-2 "At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time; but at that time your people shall be delivered, every one whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Also see: Isaiah 66:18, Eccles 3:16-17, Joel 3:12, Mich 7:4, Soph 3:5,8, John 5:28-29, John 7:48, Rev 1:7, Rev. 11:11-13,15, 17, 18, Rom. 14:10, 12, Soph 1:14-18, Psalms 9:8-9, and Psalms 95:12-13.

According to the Bible, how will we be judged? What role will our love and deeds have?

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body . . . (2 Cor. 5:10)

[God] . . . will render to every man according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for every one who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality (Rom. 2:6-11).
. . . all were judged by what they had done (Rev. 20:13).

For thou dost requite a man according to his work (Ps. 62:12-13).

“For 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” (Mt. 16:27).

[God] judges each one impartially according to his deeds (1 Pet.1:17).

Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not requite man according to his work? (Prov. 24:12)

For God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love which you showed for his sake in serving the saints . . . (Heb 6:10).

Their end will correspond to their deeds (2 Cor. 11:15).

Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward (Gal. 6:9).

. . . knowing that you will receive from the Lord the due payment of the inheritance; be slaves of the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will receive recompense for the wrong he committed, and there is no partiality (Col. 3:24-25).

WHAT DID ST. AUGUSTINE SAY ABOUT HELL?

St. Augustine: From this time shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds." What is, "from this time"? Will not the Lord come in later times, when all the tribes of the earth shall mourn? He first came in His own preachers, and filled the whole round world. Let us not resist His first coming, that we may not tremble at His second . . ." [Exposition on Psalm 96, 14]

St. Augustine: He will come, whether we like or not: for because He cometh not just now, it is no reason that He will not come at all. He will come, and when thou knowest not; and if He shall find thee ready, thy ignorance is no hurt to thee. "Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for He cometh:" at His first coming. And what afterwards? For He cometh to judge the earth. And all the trees of the woods shall rejoice." He came first: and later to judge the earth: He shall find those rejoicing who believed in His first coming, "for He cometh." [Exposition on Psalm 96, 14]

St. Augustine: " . . . they have sought men's praises, and have had them. These praises of men aid them not in the judgment day. . . " [Sermons on the New Testament, Sermon 43]

St. Augustine: " . . .that Christ shall come from heaven to judge quick and dead, this we call the last day, or last time, of the divine judgment . . . " [City of God, Book 20]

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT JUDGMENT DAY?

673 Since the Ascension Christ's coming in glory has been imminent,⁵⁶⁶ even though "it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority."⁵⁶⁷ This eschatological coming could be accomplished at any moment, even if both it and the final trial that will precede it are "delayed".⁵⁶⁸

674 The glorious Messiah's coming is suspended at every moment of history until his recognition by "all Israel", for "a hardening has come upon part of Israel" in their "unbelief" toward Jesus.⁵⁶⁹ St. Peter says to the Jews of Jerusalem after Pentecost: "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old."⁵⁷⁰ St. Paul echoes him: "For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?"⁵⁷¹ The "full inclusion" of the Jews in the Messiah's salvation, in the wake of "the full number of the Gentiles",⁵⁷² will enable the People of God to achieve "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ", in which "God may be all in all".⁵⁷³

The Church's ultimate trial

675 Before Christ's second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers.⁵⁷⁴ The persecution that accompanies her pilgrimage on earth⁵⁷⁵ will unveil the "mystery of iniquity" in the form of a religious deception offering men an apparent solution to their problems at the price of apostasy from the truth. The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist, a pseudo-messianism by which man glorifies himself in place of God and of his Messiah come in the flesh.⁵⁷⁶

676 The Antichrist's deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgment. The Church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism,⁵⁷⁷ especially the "intrinsically perverse" political form of a secular messianism.⁵⁷⁸

677 The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection.⁵⁷⁹ The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven.⁵⁸⁰ God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world.⁵⁸¹

II TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

678 Following in the steps of the prophets and John the Baptist, Jesus announced the judgment of the Last Day in his preaching.⁵⁸² Then will the conduct of each one and the secrets of hearts be brought to light.⁵⁸³ Then will the culpable unbelief that counted the offer of God's grace as nothing be condemned.⁵⁸⁴ Our attitude to our neighbor will disclose acceptance or refusal of grace and divine love.⁵⁸⁵ On the Last Day Jesus will say:

"Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."⁵⁸⁶

679 Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgment on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as redeemer of the world. He "acquired" this right by his cross. The Father has given "all judgment to the Son".⁵⁸⁷ Yet the Son did not come to judge, but to save and to give the life he has in himself.⁵⁸⁸ By rejecting grace in this life, one already judges oneself, receives according to one's works, and can even condemn oneself for all eternity by rejecting the Spirit of love.⁵⁸⁹

IN BRIEF

680 Christ the Lord already reigns through the Church, but all the things of this world are not yet subjected to him. The triumph of Christ's kingdom will not come about without one last assault by the powers of evil.

681 On Judgment Day at the end of the world, Christ will come in glory to achieve the definitive triumph of good over evil which, like the wheat and the tares, have grown up together in the course of history.

682 When he comes at the end of time to judge the living and the dead, the glorious Christ will reveal the secret disposition of hearts and will render to each man according to his works, and according to his acceptance or refusal of grace.

PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

1021 Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ.⁵⁹² The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith. The parable of the poor man Lazarus and the words of Christ on the cross to the good thief, as well as other New Testament texts speak of a final destiny of the soul--a destiny which can be different for some and for others.⁵⁹³

1022 Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven--through a purification⁵⁹⁴ or immediately,⁵⁹⁵ -- or immediate and everlasting damnation.

At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Whenever we are tempted to judge others, remember, we are going to be judged before God and the whole world.

Mt 7:1-5 "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Fortunately, it is not only our sins that will be made known, but also our charitable deeds and words that were done in secret that will also be proclaimed from the rooftops on Judgment Day.

The teaching of Jesus is difficult, but it's the one that leads to eternal happiness. Before we can see Jesus face to face, we not only have to be good, we must "be perfect." Are we on the right road? Are we moving forward? Are we seeking out the sacraments so that progress on this road will be possible?

Mt 5: 39-48: But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you. "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

CHAPTER 10 – "Now I Get... Hell"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some images the Bible associates with Hell?
2. Is it possible to get out of Hell?
3. What are some of the sins deserving of Hell, according to the Bible?
4. What is the worst pain or loss for those in Hell?
5. What change will the souls in Hell experience on Judgment Day (i.e., the Last Day, when Jesus comes again)?
6. Where in the New Testament are exorcisms described?
7. During the TV coverage of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, did you see the image in black smoke that seemed to be a detailed picture of the Satan's face? Did you see how the image remained even with a constant stream of black smoke? Do you think the devil was trying to claim a victory?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

The Dogma of Hell by Fr. F.X. Schouppe

What Will Hell be Like? (booklet by St. Alphonsus Liguori)

A Spiritual Combat and a Treatise on Peace of Soul by Dom Lorenzo Scupoli

Hell Quizzes by Frs. Rumble and Carty

Angels and Devils by Joan Carroll Cruz

Evidence of Satan in the Modern World by Leon Cristian

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

Hell www.newadvent.org/cathen/07207a.htm

Devil www.newadvent.org/cathen/04764a.htm

St Michael the Archangel www.newadvent.org/cathen/10275b.htm

Demons www.newadvent.org/cathen/04710a.htm

Demonic Possession www.newadvent.org/cathen/12315a.htm

Exorcism www.newadvent.org/cathen/05709a.htm

Limbo www.newadvent.org/cathen/09256a.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.catholic.com/library/last_things.asp (Last Things)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hell> (Wikipedia on Hell)

SCRIPTURE

What does the Bible say about the suffering and permanence of hell?

Isaiah 66: 24 "And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Rev. 20:9-10 . . . but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Mt 3:11-12 . . . gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Mark 9:42-47 "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung round his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.

Luke 16:22-26 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Laz'arus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Laz'arus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Laz'arus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

2 Thess 1:7-9 when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might

Mt 25:30 And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'

Rev 21:8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death."

Jude 1:7-8 just as Sodom and Gomor'rah and the surrounding cities, which likewise acted immorally and indulged in unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Yet in like manner these men in their dreamings defile the flesh, reject authority, and revile the glorious ones

Rev 14:11 And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image
More Scripture at www.scripturecatholic.com/hell.html

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT HELL?

St. Justin Martyr: "We have been taught that only they may aim at immortality who have lived a holy and virtuous life near to God. We believe that they who live wickedly and do not repent will be punished in everlasting fire" (*First Apology* 21 [151 A.D.]).

St. Ignatius of Antioch: "Corrupters of families will not inherit the kingdom of God. And if they who do these things according to the flesh suffer death, how much more if a man corrupt by evil teaching the faith of God for the sake of which Jesus Christ

.More Church Fathers at www.catholic.com/library/Hell_There_Is.asp

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT HELL?

1033 We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves: "He who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."⁶¹² Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brethren.⁶¹³ To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him for ever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell."

1034 Jesus often speaks of "Gehenna" of "the unquenchable fire" reserved for those who to the end of their lives refuse to believe and be converted, where both soul and body can be lost.⁶¹⁴ Jesus solemnly proclaims that he "will send his angels, and they will gather . . . all evil doers, and throw them into the furnace of fire,"⁶¹⁵ and that he will pronounce the condemnation: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire!"⁶¹⁶

1035 The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity. Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, "eternal fire."⁶¹⁷ The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs.

1036 The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a call to the responsibility incumbent upon man to make use of his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. They are at the same time an urgent call to conversion: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."⁶¹⁸

Since we know neither the day nor the hour, we should follow the advice of the Lord and watch constantly so that, when the single course of our earthly life is completed, we may merit to enter with him into the marriage feast and be numbered among the blessed, and

not, like the wicked and slothful servants, be ordered to depart into the eternal fire, into the outer darkness where "men will weep and gnash their teeth."⁶¹⁹

1037 God predestines no one to go to hell;⁶²⁰ for this, a willful turning away from God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end. In the Eucharistic liturgy and in the daily prayers of her faithful, the Church implores the mercy of God, who does not want "any to perish, but all to come to repentance":⁶²¹

Father, accept this offering
from your whole family.
Grant us your peace in this life,
save us from final damnation,
and count us among those you have chosen.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Jesus made a special promise St. Faustina Kowalska concerning the salvation of a dying person. The promise entails praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet in the presence of that dying person. Here is what Jesus said: "When they say this Chaplet in the presence of the dying, I will stand between My Father and the dying person not as the just judge but as the Merciful Savior."

Here is the Divine Mercy Chaplet: www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/mercy/dmmmap.htm All you need is a rosary and the prayers on the web site.

Jesus also said to St. Faustina: "Say unceasingly this chaplet that I have taught you. Anyone who says it will receive great Mercy at the hour of death. Priests will recommend it to sinners as the last hope. Even the most hardened sinner, if he recites this Chaplet even once, will receive grace from My Infinite Mercy. I want the whole world to know My Infinite Mercy. I want to give unimaginable graces to those who trust in My Mercy...."

CHAPTER 11 – "Got Morals?"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the two purposes of marriage?
2. Both marriage and life-long virginity for the Kingdom are gifts from God. But which does the Church teach is the greater gift?
3. Can a true Christian marriage ever be dissolved if both spouses are alive?
4. Are there any circumstances in which the marriage of a Christian and non-Christian can be dissolved? (Hint: the Pauline privilege)
5. What did Jesus say about marriage? about divorce? about remarriage?
6. What does the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament say about the complementarity of the sexes?
7. What does 1 Tim 2:11-15 say about child-bearing?
8. In 1 Cor 7:10-11, what does St. Paul say a wife must do if she separates?
9. Is it permissible for married couples to space childbirths if need be? By what method?
10. To help infertile couples conceive, the Church permits things such as hormonal treatments or surgical repair of Fallopian tubes. What does the Church *not* permit?
11. Pope John Paul II said that refusing food and water to a healthy (although disabled) person such as Terri Schiavo would be gravely wrong. If Terri had been an elderly woman who was in pain and dying of cancer, would the pope have considered this a different case? (hint: yes). If Terri had been on a heart and lung machine, would the pope have considered this a different case? (hint: yes) Why?
11. Why do you think it is that the divorce rate of married couples who use natural family planning is just a fraction of the divorce rate of those contraception?
12. A human embryo and a human cell taken from an arm or leg are both human. But in terms of DNA, how does a human embryo differ from other kinds of human cells? Nine months later, what will the embryo become? What will the arm cell become? How old is an embryo when his heart starts beating?
13. Recall rapper Nick Cannon's music video, which portrays the true story of his mother deciding not to abort him and running out of the hospital. What are ways in which we can testify to the truth of our faith in our social lives or our work lives? In our artistic expression?
14. Are scientists sometimes so motivated by the idea of doing something nobody has done before that they violate their own conscience as well as divine truth?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Beginning Apologetics 5: How to Answer Tough Moral Questions (abortion, contraception, euthanasia, test tube babies, cloning, and social ethics) by Fr. Frank Chacon

Brother Astronomer: Adventures of a Vatican Scientist by Guy Consolmagno

The Sun in the Church: Cathedrals as Solar Observatories by Berkeley professor J.L. Heilbron

If You Really Loved Me: 100 Questions on Dating, Relationships, and Sexual Purity by Jason Evert

Theology of the Body for Beginners by Christopher West

Theology of the Body Explained by Christopher West (commentary on JP2's "Gospel of the Body")

Good News About Sex and Marriage by Christopher West

The Bible and Birth Control by Charles D. Provan

Sex and the Marriage Covenant by John F. Kippley

Annulments: What you need to know. by Jimmy Akin

Annulments & the Catholic Church by Edward Peters

Open Embrace: A Protestant Couple Rethinks Contraception by Sam Torode

<http://www.concernedcatholics.org/chastity.htm> Chastity

<http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ209.HTM> (articles on moral theology)

http://ascensioncatholic.net/ALPHA%20TOPICS/sexual_morality_Part%20two.htm
(Sexual Morality Issues)

http://www.staycatholic.com/sexually_transmitted_diseases_devastate_millions.htm
(Sexually Transmitted Diseases)

Why Humanae Vitae was Right: A Reader by Janet E. Smith

<http://priestsforlife.org/products/dvdseeforyourself.htm> (DVD on most common abortion procedures)

<http://touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=18-01-038-f> (The Facts of Life and Marriage)

<http://stillcatholic.com/CATHsinQ.htm> (The Sin Quiz)

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA.

[MORAL THEOLOGY](#)

[MORALITY](#)

[ETHICS](#)

[NATURAL LAW](#)

[DIVINE LAW](#)

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.ncbcenter.org/ (National Catholic Bioethics Center)

www.pacatholic.org/ecumenism/living%20will%20and%20proxy.pdf (Living Will and Proxy for Health Care Decisions)

www.ncbcenter.org/em/0510-1.aspx (Sex changes)

www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_academies/acdlife/documents/rc_pa_acdlife_doc_30091997_clon_en.html (Vatican Reflections on Cloning)

www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a6.htm#2384 (Catechism: Marriage and Divorce)

<http://cin.org/nfp.html> (Natural Family Planning)

<http://osv.com/whatthechurchteaches/Annulments/index.asp> (Annulments)

[Humanae Vitae](#): Encyclical of Pope Paul VI on the Regulation of Birth (July 25, 1968)

[Theology of the Body](#) [Birth Control](#) [Sterilization](#)

www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/treatment.htm (Reproductive Technology - U.S. Bishops)

www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/treatment.htm (John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage & Family at the Catholic University of America, Wash. D.C.)

www.pacatholic.org/ (PA Catholic Conference)

www.cst-phl.com/050310/third.html (Ten Myths in Stem Cell Debate)

[Life Sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State](#) (Address by Pope John Paul II)

[Evangelium Vitae](#) (Pope John Paul II on the Value & Inviolability of Human Life)

www.frc.org/ (Family Research Council: promoting the Judeo-Christian family values)

www.catholic.com/thisrock/2001/0102fea2.asp (Abortion: Science and Faith)

www.friendsoftheunborn.org/abortion.htm (Friends of the Unborn)

www.emmerich1.com/ABORTION.htm (Abortion Information Super Site)

www.catholic.com/chastity/Q6.asp (How far is too far?)

www.christianity.com/CC/article/0,,PTID4211%7CCCHID102755%7CCIID232145,00.html (Pope Paul VI and his predictions about the pill) In 1968, Pope Paul VI predicted that the invention and dissemination of the pill would lead to "conjugal infidelity and the general lowering of morality." He further said more men would treat women "as a mere instrument of selfish enjoyment, and no longer as his respected and beloved companion."

SCRIPTURE

What does the Bible say about premarital sex (fornication)?

Mark 7:21-23 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man."

Colossians 3:5-6 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming

Ephesians 5:3-5 But fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints.

Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving. Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God

Gal 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh

What does the Bible say about marriage?

Mk 10:7-12 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Mt 19:5-6 [Jesus] said, `For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

Heb 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous.

What does the Bible say about divorce and remarriage?

1 Cor 7:10-11 To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband) -- and that the husband should not divorce his wife

Malachi 2:16 "For I hate divorce, says the LORD the God of Israel"

Rom 7:2-3 Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband.

Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

How did God punish Onan after he spilled his seed on the ground instead of in the woman?

Genesis 38: 9-10 But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife he spilled the semen on the ground, lest he should give offspring to his brother. And what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD, and he slew him also

What does the Bible say about the complementarity of the sexes?

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

1 Cor 6:9 Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Tim 1:9-10 understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, immoral persons, sodomites, kidnapers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine,

Lv 18:22-24 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. And you shall not lie with any beast and defile yourself with it, neither shall any woman give herself to a beast to lie with it: it is perversion. "Do not defile yourselves by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am casting out before you defiled themselves

Lv 20:13 If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them

Genesis 2:21-24 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh

Genesis 1:27 Be fruitful and multiply

Genesis 19 (Story of Sodom and Gomor'rah)

What does the Bible say about sterilization?

Deuteronomy 23:1 "He whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall not enter the assembly of the LORD.

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY?

On the Marriage Bond

1638 "From a valid marriage arises a *bond* between the spouses which by its very nature is perpetual and exclusive; furthermore, in a Christian marriage the spouses are strengthened and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state *by a special sacrament*."¹⁴²

1639 The consent by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another is sealed by God himself.¹⁴³ From their covenant arises "an institution, confirmed by the divine law, . . . even in the eyes of society."¹⁴⁴ The covenant between the spouses is integrated into God's covenant with man: "Authentic married love is caught up into divine love."¹⁴⁵

1640 Thus *the marriage bond* has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved. This bond, which results from the free human act of the spouses and their consummation of the marriage, is a reality, henceforth irrevocable, and gives rise to a covenant guaranteed by God's fidelity. The Church does not have the power to contravene this disposition of divine wisdom.¹⁴⁶

On Marriage and the openness to fertility (Catechism)

1652 "By its very nature the institution of marriage and married love is ordered to the procreation and education of the offspring and it is in them that it finds its crowning glory."¹⁶²

Children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves. God himself said: "It is not good that man should be alone," and "from the beginning [he] made them male and female"; wishing to associate them in a special way in his own creative work, God blessed man and woman with the words: "Be fruitful and multiply." Hence, true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it, without diminishment of the other ends of marriage, are directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will increase and enrich his family from day to day.¹⁶³

1653 The fruitfulness of conjugal love extends to the fruits of the moral, spiritual, and supernatural life that parents hand on to their children by education. Parents are the principal and first educators of their children.¹⁶⁴ In this sense the fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life.¹⁶⁵

1654 Spouses to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice.

On Virginity for the sake of the Kingdom (Catechism)

1618 Christ is the center of all Christian life. The bond with him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social.¹¹³ From the very beginning of the Church there have been men and women who have renounced the great good of marriage to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, to be intent on the things of the Lord, to seek to please him, and to go out to meet the Bridegroom who is coming.¹¹⁴ Christ himself has invited certain persons to follow him in this way of life, of which he remains the model:

"For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it."¹¹⁵

1619 Virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is an unfolding of baptismal grace, a powerful sign of the supremacy of the bond with Christ and of the ardent expectation of his return, a sign which also recalls that marriage is a reality of this present age which is passing away.¹¹⁶

1620 Both the sacrament of Matrimony and virginity for the Kingdom of God come from the Lord himself. It is he who gives them meaning and grants them the grace which is indispensable for living them out in conformity with his will.¹¹⁷ Esteem of virginity for the sake of the kingdom¹¹⁸ and the Christian understanding of marriage are inseparable, and they reinforce each other:

Whoever denigrates marriage also diminishes the glory of virginity. Whoever praises it makes virginity more admirable and resplendent. What appears good only in comparison with evil would not be truly good. The most excellent good is something even better than what is admitted to be good.¹¹⁹

On Abortion (Catechism)

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.⁷²

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.⁷³

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.⁷⁴

2271 Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law:

You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish.⁷⁵

God, the Lord of life, has entrusted to men the noble mission of safeguarding life, and men must carry it out in a manner worthy of themselves. Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception: abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.⁷⁶

2272 Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*,"⁷⁷ "by the very commission of the offense,"⁷⁸ and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law.⁷⁹ The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.

2273 The inalienable right to life of every innocent human individual is a *constitutive element of a civil society and its legislation*:

"The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights depend neither on single individuals nor

on parents; nor do they represent a concession made by society and the state; they belong to human nature and are inherent in the person by virtue of the creative act from which the person took his origin. Among such fundamental rights one should mention in this regard every human being's right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death."⁸⁰

"The moment a positive law deprives a category of human beings of the protection which civil legislation ought to accord them, the state is denying the equality of all before the law. When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen, and in particular of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined. . . . As a consequence of the respect and protection which must be ensured for the unborn child from the moment of conception, the law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights."⁸¹

2274 Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.

Prenatal diagnosis is morally licit, "if it respects the life and integrity of the embryo and the human fetus and is directed toward its safe guarding or healing as an individual. . . . It is gravely opposed to the moral law when this is done with the thought of possibly inducing an abortion, depending upon the results: a diagnosis must not be the equivalent of a death sentence."⁸²

2275 "One must hold as licit procedures carried out on the human embryo which respect the life and integrity of the embryo and do not involve disproportionate risks for it, but are directed toward its healing the improvement of its condition of health, or its individual survival."⁸³

"It is immoral to produce human embryos intended for exploitation as disposable biological material."⁸⁴

"Certain attempts to *influence chromosomic or genetic inheritance* are not therapeutic but are aimed at producing human beings selected according to sex or other predetermined qualities. Such manipulations are contrary to the personal dignity of the human being and his integrity and identity"⁸⁵ which are unique and unrepeatable.

On Euthanasia (Catechism)

2276 Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.

2277 Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.

Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

2278 Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

2279 Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.

On Suicide (Catechism)

2280 Everyone is responsible for his life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of.

2281 Suicide contradicts the natural inclination of the human being to preserve and perpetuate his life. It is gravely contrary to the just love of self. It likewise offends love of neighbor because it unjustly breaks the ties of solidarity with family, nation, and other human societies to which we continue to have obligations. Suicide is contrary to love for the living God.

2282 If suicide is committed with the intention of setting an example, especially to the young, it also takes on the gravity of scandal. Voluntary co-operation in suicide is contrary to the moral law.

Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.

2283 We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives.

On Artificial Insemination (Catechism)

2376 Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses' "right to become a father and a mother only through each other."¹⁶⁷

2377 Techniques involving only the married couple (homologous artificial insemination and fertilization) are perhaps less reprehensible, yet remain morally unacceptable. They dissociate the sexual act from the procreative act. The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that "entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common to parents and children."¹⁶⁸ "Under the moral aspect procreation is deprived of its proper perfection when it is not willed as the fruit of the conjugal act, that is to say, of the specific act of the spouses' union Only respect for the link between the meanings of the conjugal act and respect for the unity of the human being make possible procreation in conformity with the dignity of the person."¹⁶⁹

On Chastity and Homosexuality (Catechism)

2357 Homosexuality refers to relations between men or between women who experience an exclusive or predominant sexual attraction toward persons of the same sex. It has taken a great variety of forms through the centuries and in different cultures. Its psychological genesis remains largely unexplained. Basing itself on Sacred Scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of grave depravity,¹⁴¹ tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered."¹⁴² They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.

2358 The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, which is objectively disordered, constitutes for most of them a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided. These persons are called to fulfill God's will in their lives and, if they are Christians, to unite to the sacrifice of the Lord's Cross the difficulties they may encounter from their condition.

2359 Homosexual persons are called to chastity. By the virtues of self-mastery that teach them inner freedom, at times by the support of disinterested friendship, by prayer and sacramental grace, they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection.

On Offenses to Chastity (Catechism)

2352 By *masturbation* is to be understood the deliberate stimulation of the genital organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. "Both the Magisterium of the Church, in the course of a constant tradition, and the moral sense of the faithful have been in no doubt and have firmly maintained that masturbation is an intrinsically and gravely disordered action."¹³⁸ "The deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason, outside of marriage is essentially contrary to its purpose." For here sexual pleasure is sought outside of "the sexual relationship which is demanded by the moral order and in which the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love is achieved."¹³⁹ To form an equitable judgment about the subjects' moral responsibility and to guide pastoral action, one must take into account the affective immaturity, force of acquired habit, conditions of anxiety or other psychological or social factors that lessen, if not even reduce to a minimum, moral culpability.

2353 *Fornication* is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young.

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT CONTRACEPTION WITHIN MARRIAGE?

St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Catecheses 4. 25 (probably 350 AD): "Let those also be of good cheer who are married and use their marriage properly; who enter marriage lawfully, and not out of wantonness and unbounded license; who recognize periods of continence so that they may give themselves to prayer [alludes to 1 Cor 7. 5]... who have embarked upon the matrimonial estate for the procreation of children and not for the sake of indulgence." (Source: www.ewtn.com/library/PROLIFE/CONTRACE.TXT)

St. Clement of Alexandria. Paedagogos 2. 10:(before 202. AD)"Marriage in itself merits esteem and the highest approval, for the Lord wished men to 'be fruitful and multiply. ' He did not tell them, however, to act like libertines, nor did He intend them to surrender themselves to pleasure as though born only to indulge in sexual relations... . Why, even unreasoning beasts know enough not to mate at certain times. To indulge in intercourse without intending children is to outrage nature, whom we should take as our instructor." (Source: www.ewtn.com/library/PROLIFE/CONTRACE.TXT)

St. Augustine: "This proves that you [Manicheans] approve of having a wife, not for the procreation of children, but for the gratification of passion. In marriage, as the marriage law declares, the man and woman come together for the procreation of children. Therefore, whoever makes the procreation of children a greater sin than copulation, forbids marriage and makes the woman not a wife but a mistress, who for some gifts presented to her is joined to the man to gratify his passion" (The Morals of the Manichees 18:65 [388 A.D.]).

St. Augustine: "You [Manicheans] make your auditors adulterers of their wives when they take care lest the women with whom they copulate conceive. They take wives according to the laws of matrimony by tablets announcing that the marriage is contracted to procreate children; and then, fearing because of your law [against childbearing] . . . they copulate in a shameful union only to satisfy lust for their wives. They are unwilling to have children, on whose account alone marriages are made. How is it, then, that you are not those prohibiting marriage, as the apostle predicted of you so long ago [1 Tim. 4:1-4], when you try to take from marriage what marriage is? When this is taken away, husbands are shameful lovers, wives are harlots, bridal chambers are brothels, fathers-in-law are pimps" (Against Faustus 15:7 [400 A.D.]).

How did Martin Luther describe contraception? He said it was a "sin greater than adultery and incest."

<http://ic.net/~erasmus/RAZ274.HTM> (Early Church Teaching on Contraception)

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/ANSWERS/FKBCONTR.HTM> (The Fathers Know Best)

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Pray for the sanctity of life from start to its natural end. Pray that doctors will respect life and God's laws. Pray that mothers considering an abortion will have a change of heart, and that these mothers will be supported by the Church. Pray that individuals with a homosexual orientation will have the grace to remain chaste, and that they will receive support and prayers in their walks from all Christians.

Educate yourself so that you will be able to properly expound on the issues related to life should the topic of conversation come up.

Do you invest in the stock market? If you invest in pharmaceutical companies, have you checked out those companies to make sure they do not conduct research on destroyed embryos?

What tragic consequences did Pope Paul VI predict regarding the new widespread availability of the pill? (See *Humane Vitae*) Did his predictions come true?

Does your parish offer a class on natural family planning to help prepare couples considering marriage? Does your parish offer brochures that outline the reproductive technologies that are permissible for married couples? How can you help educate parish members on topics such as abortion, contraception, etc.

On one occasion, Jesus asked St. Faustina Kowalska to suffer hours worth of agony to make reparation to God "for the souls murdered in the wombs of wicked mothers." What little sacrifices can we make to make reparation for the agony that we and others have caused Jesus?

CHAPTER 12 – "Now I Get... Penance"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are three forms of penance?
2. The life, death and Resurrection of Jesus wiped away the eternal punishment of sin for those who have repented. But what role does penance play in wiping away temporary punishment for our sins?
3. If we are forgiven for our sin when we die, we will be saved. But if we haven't finished repenting for our sins prior to dying, where do we finish up prior to entering heaven?
4. Jot down the names of 4 to 6 saints. Research to find out what these saints did for penance.
5. What were the promises made to St. Faustina regarding Divine Mercy Sunday?
6. What did St. Francis of Assisi and St. Padre Pio have in common? (Hint: It begins with "st")
7. What are the minimum fasting and abstinence obligations of the Church for Lent?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

History of Penance by Oscar D. Watkins

Suffering: The Catholic Answer by Hubert Van Zeller

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA.

Lent www.newadvent.org/cathen/09152a.htm

Indulgences www.newadvent.org/cathen/07783a.htm

Tertullian www.newadvent.org/fathers/0408.htm ("On Fasting" by Early Church writer Tertullian)

Alms and Almsgiving www.newadvent.org/cathen/01328f.htm

Mortification www.newadvent.org/cathen/10578b.htm

Stigmata www.newadvent.org/cathen/14294b.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/holycom/histlent.htm (Brief History of Lent)

www.ewtn.com/library/LITURGY/HISTLENT.TXT (Long History of Lent)

www.catholicherald.com/saunders/02ws/ws020214.htm (Lent History by Fr. Saunders)

www.catholic.com/library/Forgiveness_of_Sins.asp (The Forgiveness of Sins)

WHERE DOES SCRIPTURE DISCUSS FASTING AND DENYING ONESELF?

Mt. 9:15: And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

Mt. 6:16-18 "And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Dan. 10:3 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks. I ate no delicacies, no meat or wine entered my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks

Luke 9:23-24: And he said to all, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it.

More Bible verses on Suffering.

WHAT DID ST PAUL SAY ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN ROLE OF SUFFERING?

Colossians 1:24: Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church

1 Corinthians 9:27: Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Gal. 6:17: Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT PERFORMING PENANCE?

THE MANY FORMS OF PENANCE IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

1434 The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on three forms, *fasting, prayer, and almsgiving*,³¹ which express conversion in relation to oneself, to God, and to others. Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: effort at reconciliation with one's neighbor, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbor, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity "which covers a multitude of sins."³²

1435 Conversion is accomplished in daily life by gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, the exercise and defense of justice and right,³³ by the admission of faults to one's brethren, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness. Taking up one's cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance.³⁴

1436 *Eucharist and Penance*. Daily conversion and penance find their source and nourishment in the Eucharist, for in it is made present the sacrifice of Christ which has reconciled us with God. Through the Eucharist those who live from the life of Christ are fed and strengthened. "It is a remedy to free us from our daily faults and to preserve us from mortal sins."³⁵

1437 Reading Sacred Scripture, praying the Liturgy of the Hours and the Our Father - every sincere act of worship or devotion revives the spirit of conversion and repentance within us and contributes to the forgiveness of our sins.

1438 *The seasons and days of penance* in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice.³⁶ These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).

1439 *The process of conversion and repentance* was described by Jesus in the parable of the prodigal son, the center of which is the merciful father:³⁷ the fascination of illusory freedom, the abandonment of the father's house; the extreme misery in which the son finds himself after squandering his fortune; his deep humiliation at finding himself obliged to feed swine, and still worse, at wanting to feed on the husks the pigs ate; his reflection on all he has lost; his repentance and decision to declare himself guilty before his father; the journey back; the father's generous welcome; the father's joy - all these are characteristic of the process of conversion. The beautiful robe, the ring, and the festive banquet are symbols of that new life - pure worthy, and joyful - of anyone who returns to God and to the bosom of his family, which is the Church. Only the heart Of Christ Who knows the depths of his Father's love could reveal to us the abyss of his mercy in so simple and beautiful a way.

For more Catechism on penance, look [HERE](#)

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT DOING PENANCE?

St. Augustine: "When you shall have been baptized, keep to a good life in the commandments of God so that you may preserve your baptism to the very end. I do not tell you that you will live here without sin, but they are venial sins which this life is never without. Baptism was instituted for all sins. For light sins, without which we cannot live, prayer was instituted. . . . But do not commit those sins on account of which you would have to be separated from the body of Christ. Perish the thought! For those whom you see doing penance have committed crimes, either adultery or some other enormities. That is why they are doing penance. If their sins were light, daily prayer would suffice to blot them out. . . . In the Church, therefore, there are three ways in which sins are forgiven: in baptisms, in prayer, and in the greater humility of penance" (*Sermon to Catechumens on the Creed* 7:15, 8:16 [395 A.D.]).

St. Jerome: "If the serpent, the devil, bites someone secretly, he infects that person with the venom of sin. And if the one who has been bitten keeps silence and does not do penance, and does not want to confess his wound . . . then his brother and his master, who have the word [of absolution] that will cure him, cannot very well assist him" (*Commentary on Ecclesiastes* 10:11 [A.D. 388]).

St. Basil the Great: "It is necessary to confess our sins to those to whom the dispensation of God's mysteries is entrusted. Those doing penance of old are found to have done it before the saints. It is written in the Gospel that they confessed their sins to John the Baptist [Matt. 3:6], but in Acts [19:18] they confessed to the apostles" (*Rules Briefly Treated* 288 [374 A.D.]).

St. Ignatius of Antioch: "For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are also with the bishop. And as many as shall, in the exercise of penance, return into the unity of the Church, these, too, shall belong to God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ" (*Letter to the Philadelphians* 3 [A.D. 110]).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS:

Not everyone is able to sacrifice their lives for the Kingdom like Carmelite nuns and Franciscan friars. But we can at least make little sacrifices for the good of our own souls, the souls of others, and the whole world.

The Bible says we are supposed to take up our cross daily. Jot down a few daily sacrifices we can fit into our days. For example, some ideas might be giving up car radio on the way to work, giving up that cup of mocha latte, putting some extra money in the collection basket at Mass, or meditating over a page of the Bible. Maybe invite a friend to come to Confession with you?

What are some ways to make the next Lent a time of greater spiritual growth? Besides fasting, can you make it to daily Mass, or at least one extra Mass each week?

How often do we examine our conscience? Are we saying an Act of Contrition before we go to bed each night?

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins, because of Your just punishments, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

CHAPTER 13 – "Now I Get... The Saints"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who is your patron saint and what can you remember about him or her?
2. Was your parish named for a saint? What did this saint do?
3. Make a list of a few other saints. What role did the Eucharist and other sacraments play in the lives of these saints?
4. How did the lives and goals of these saints clash with values prevalent in Western culture today?
5. How were these saints influenced positively by the people around them?
6. Did these saints struggle with sin? What tools and weapons did they use to fight sin?
7. What is the communion of saints? How are we all connected?
8. Who is the patron saint of cancer? Lost things? Slander? Heart ailments? Women? Babies? Astronomy? Television? (Hint: Answers can be found at www.catholic-forum.com/saints/patron00.htm)
9. How do we know that the prayers of a holy saint are even stronger than the prayer of one of our friends? (Hint: See James 5:16)
10. Many of the saints in the Early Church were martyrs. If you were called to be a martyr right now, would your faith be strong enough?
11. Have you read anything that was written by a saint? What was it?
12. What shrines are in or around your city?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Mother Cabrini: Italian Immigrant of the Century by Sister Mary Sullivan, Ph.D.

Padre Pio: The True Story by C. Bernard Ruffin

Saint Katharine Drexel : Apostle to the Oppressed by Lou Baldwin

Encyclopedia of Catholic Saints (published by Our Sunday Visitor)

Praying in the Presence...with Fulton Sheen (Our Sunday Visitor – devotional)

Praying in the Presence...with Thomas Aquinas (Our Sunday Visitor - devotional)

Praying in the Presence...With the Saints (Our Sunday Visitor – devotional)

Raised from the Dead: True Stories of 400 Resurrection Miracles by Fr. Albert J. Hebert

Forty Dreams of St. John Bosco by St. John Bosco

Mysteries, Marvels and Miracles in the Lives of the Saints by Joan Carroll Cruz

HELPFUL MEDIA

Video: A Time for Miracles (story of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton)

Video: St. Francis of Assisi (starring Bradford Dillman)

Video St. Joan of Arc (1999) (starring Leelee Sobieski)

Video: Don Bosco: (1988) A Film by Leandro Castellano (starring Ben Gazzara)

Video: St Augustine: His Life & Spirituality (with Fr. Benedict Groeschel)

Video: Bernadette (1988 - starring Sydney Penny)

Video: [A Man for All Seasons](#) (1966) (Academy Award winner – conflict between St. Thomas More & King Henry VIII)

Video: [Therese: the Story of a Saint](#) (2004)

Video: [The Song of Bernadette](#) (1943) – nominated for 12 Academy Awards!

SAINT VIDEOS FOR CHILDREN

[The Day the Sun Danced](#) (true story of 1917 apparition of Mary in Portugal)

[St. Juan Diego: Messenger of Guadalupe](#) (true story of miracle in Mexico)

[St. Patrick: Brave Shepherd of the Emerald Isle](#)

[St. Nicholas: the Boy who became Santa](#)

[Bernadette: the Princess of Lourdes](#) (true story)

[St. Francis: the Knight of Assisi](#)

[Guardian Angel Video](#)

[The Fifth Word: The Life of Mother Teresa](#)

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

www.newadvent.org/cathen/06221a.htm (St. Francis of Assisi)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/04004a.htm (St. Clare of Assisi)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/08480a.htm (St. John of the Cross)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/15254a.htm (St. Valentine)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/14663b.htm (St. Thomas Aquinas)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/04099b.htm (St. Colette)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/07639c.htm (St. Ignatius Loyola)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/11554a.htm (St. Patrick)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/02784b.htm (St. Brigid of Ireland)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/13192c.htm (St. Rose of Lima)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/06220a.htm (St. Francis de Sales)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/03447a.htm (St. Catherine of Siena)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/14515b.htm (St. Teresa of Avila)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/10275b.htm (St. Michael the Archangel)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/06330a.htm (St. Gabriel the Archangel)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/12734a.htm (Relics)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/10338a.htm (Miracles)

WHICH SAINTS WERE CHURCH FATHERS?

Here are just a few:

St. Augustine, St. Justin Martyr, St. Clement, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Jerome, St. Irenaeus of Lyons, St. Ambrose, St. Athanasius, St. Basil the Great, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. John Chrysostom

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.stillcatholic.com/CATHSaints.htm (THE SAINTS)

www.catholic-forum.com/saints/patronnm.htm (Patron Saints Index)

www.stillcatholic.com/Pilgrimage.htm (Pilgrimages)

www.faustina.ch/index_en.htm (Saint Faustina)

WORKS WRITTEN BY SAINTS

The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux: The Story of a Soul (John Beevers, translator)

Thoughts of St. Therese: The Little Flower of Jesus Carmelite of the Monastery of Lisieux, 1873-1897 by St. Therese of Lisieux

The Confessions by St. Augustine

The City of God by St. Augustine

Letters of St. Augustine of Hippo

Summa Theologica by St. Thomas Aquinas

Interior Castle by St. Teresa de Avila

The Letters of St. Teresa de Avila

The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ by the Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich. An alternative version is located [here](#).

Confessio by St. Patrick

Spiritual Exercises by St. Ignatius Loyola

The Exercise of Virtue by St. Francis de Sales

The Sermons of St. Francis de Sales on Prayer

St. Therese of Lisieux on Prayer

St. Therese of Lisieux on Suffering

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY?

St. Jerome: "We do not worship, we do not adore [*non colimus, non adoramus*], for fear that we should bow down to the creature rather than to the Creator, but we venerate [*honoramus*] the relics of the martyrs in order the better to adore Him whose martyrs they are." ("Ad Riparium", i, P. L., XXII, 907)

St. Cyril of Alexandria: We by no means consider the holy martyrs to be gods, nor are we wont to bow down before them adoringly, but only relatively and reverentially [*oulatreutikos alla schetikos kai timetikos*]. ("Adv. Julian.", vi, P. G. LXXVI, 812)

Martyr St. Theodore by St. Gregory of Nyssa (P. G., XLVI, 735-48). According to Catholic Encyclopedia: *Contrasting the horror produced by an ordinary corpse with the veneration paid to the body of a saint the preacher expatiates upon the adornment lavished upon the building which had been erected over the martyr's resting place, and he describes how the worshipper is led to approach the tomb "believing that to touch it is itself a sanctification and a blessing and if it be permitted to carry off any of the dust which has settled upon the martyr's resting place, the dust is accounted as a great gift and the mould as a precious treasure. And as for touching the relics themselves, if that should ever be our happiness, only those who have experienced it and who have had their wish gratified can know how much this is desirable and how worthy a recompense it is of aspiring prayer"* (col. 740).

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

1. Saints are real-life examples of the path to Jesus. They are human, yet they keep their eye on the goal: Jesus Christ. Stop by the library or bookstore and pick out a biography of a saint that interests you. View a movie or documentary about a saint. Try to emulate that saint in some little way. Ask him or her to pray for your special intentions. Stay loyal to your new friend, who can be of great help to you. After all, the saints see Jesus face to face, and are filled with love for those who need help.
2. A major motion film on the simple life of St. Therese Lisieux was shown at selected theaters in 2004. The DVD is available at www.theresemovie.com. Invite some friends over to watch. The movie is called *Therese: The Story of St. Therese of Lisieux*.
3. Jot down a prayer or writings of one of your favorite saints prayed. Keep it close to you. **Here are just a few:**

**Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi , St. Therese Lisieux on Suffering ,
Morning Prayer by St. Therese Lisieux , Prayer of St. Bonaventure ,
Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas , Prayer of St. Patrick , St. Faustina's
Prayer Before Eucharist , Prayer by St. Ephrem , Prayer to St. Mary
Magdalene , Memorare to St. Joseph , Prayer of all types**

4. For special favors, there are nine-day **novenas** that may be said to specific saints. Surf around the Internet and print some out. Check out some extra strong novenas **HERE**.
5. Everybody likes a road trip. Combine your next one with a visit to a shrine of a saint. For example, if you are coming to Philadelphia, be sure to come by the National Shrine of St. John Neumann, where the little bishop's body still rests. In New York, visit the Padre Pio Shrine. In Baltimore, visit the St. Jude Shrine. In Lowell, Mass., visit the St. Joseph the Worker Shrine. In San Francisco, visit the national shrine to St. Francis of Assisi. Here is some information on some other Catholic Shrines in the United States. Info on shrines near you: **www.catholicshrines.net/**
6. It is thought that God gives saints extra grace on their feast days to help people. Check out the **saint of the day** and ask for his or her help

CHAPTER 14 – "Now I Get... Mary"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.
2. What connection does this doctrine have to Mary's apparitions to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, France?
3. Why is there no tombstone or grave for Mary?
4. Explain the Assumption of Mary into heaven.
5. What did the pregnant Elizabeth say to the pregnant Mary when Mary arrived for her visit?
6. Why is Mary known as the Second Eve? Who is the Second Adam?
7. What is Mary's connection to Ephesus, Turkey?
8. When Jesus was hanging on the Cross, who did Jesus appoint to care for Mary?
9. How did Mary share in the sufferings of her Son?
10. What is considered the very first intercession of Mary, i.e., the first time Mary requested and secured Jesus' help for others)? (Hint: It's in the Bible, and it involves a wedding)
11. Which events in Jesus' life was Mary present for? Which events was she present for after His Resurrection?
12. Television viewers spotted an "M" on the coffin of Pope John Paul II in 2005. What was the "M" for?
13. What did the Early Church Christians say about Mary?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Beginning Apologetics 6: How to Explain and Defend Marian Doctrines (a booklet by Fr. Frank Chacon and Jim Burnham)

Hail Holy Queen by Scott Hahn

Mary the Second Eve by John Henry Newman

The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary (based on the visions of Ven. Anne Catherine Emmerich, a late nun and mystic)

Refuting the Attack on Mary by Fr. Mateo

The Secret of the Rosary by St. Louis De Montfort

Theotokos by Michael O'Carroll

Mary and the Fathers of the Church by L. Gambero

Madonna: Mary in the Catholic Tradition by Frederick Jelly, O.P.

The Truth About Mary by R. Payesko

Mary, Archetype of the Church by Otto Semmelroth

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

www.newadvent.org/cathen/15464b.htm (The Blessed Virgin Mary)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/13184b.htm (The Rosary)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/07674d.htm (Immaculate Conception)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/15480a.htm (The Visitation - Mary visit cousin Elizabeth, pregnant with John the Baptist)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/01541c.htm (The Annunciation - the angel Gabriel appears to Mary)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/09534a.htm (Magnificat)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/01538a.htm (St. Anne, mother of Mary)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/08406b.htm (St. Joachim, father of Mary)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/09389b.htm (Lourdes, France: Mary's apparitions to St. Bernadette)
www.fatima.org/ (The Assumption of Mary into Heaven)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/10115a.htm (Miraculous Medal)
www.cammonline.org/pages/freeMedal.html (Get a free Miraculous Medal, which was designed by Mary herself)
www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP960904.HTM (Pope John Paul II on Mary)
www.newadvent.org/cathen/15448a.htm (The Virgin Birth of Jesus)

HELPFUL WEB SITES

www.osv.com/rosary/ (Pray the Rosary)
www.sancta.org (Detailed account of the apparitions to St. Juan Diego in Mexico. Includes a timeline)
http://www.lourdes-france.org/index.php?goto_centre=ru&contexte=en&id=838 (Official site of Mary's apparitions in Lourdes)
[/www.fatima.org/](http://www.fatima.org/) (Our Lady of Fatima Online: Info on Mary's apparitions in Portugal)
www.catholic.com/library/mary_saints.asp (Catholic Answers tracts on Mary)
www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/novena/immaculate.htm (Novena Prayer to the Immaculate Conception)
catholicism.about.com/od/novenastomary/ (More Novenas for special requests to Mary)
www.amm.org/medal.htm (The Miraculous Medal)
www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/mir/mirmedal.htm (How the Miraculous Medal changed a priest's life)

HELPFUL MEDIA

Video/DVD: [Mary the Mother of God](#) (author Stephen Ray)
Video: [FATIMA](#), hosted by Ricardo Montalban (EWTN Global Catholic Network)
Video: [FATIMA: Altar of the World](#) (shot on location in Europe - the whole story of Fatima apparitions)
Video: [Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of Hope!](#) (see and hear from Guadalupe experts and the pope)
Video: [Bernadette](#): Introducing the saint of Lourdes and Nevers, France (documentary)
Video: [Mary's House: All are invited](#) (The house where Mary lived in Ephesus may be the only place in the world where both Christians and Muslims pray)
Audiotapes: [All Generations Shall Call Me Blessed](#) (St. Joseph Communications)

SCRIPTURE

What are some Bible verses that refer to Mary?

Lk 1:28-37 And he came to her and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

Lk. 1:38-49 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechari'ah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the babe in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Mt 1:23-25 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

JESUS APPOINTS THE APOSTLE JOHN TO BE MARY'S NEW SON

Jn. 19:26 When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

27: Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Jn 2:1-11 On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the

servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast." So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now." This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

For many additional verses, see www.scripturecatholic.com/blessed_virgin_mary.html

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY?

St. Ambrose of Milan: "Imitate her [Mary], holy mothers, who in her only dearly beloved Son set forth so great an example of material virtue; for neither have you sweeter children [than Jesus], nor did the Virgin seek the consolation of being able to bear another son" (*Letters* 63:111 [388 A.D.]).

St. Cyril of Alexandria: The "Word himself, coming into the Blessed Virgin herself, assumed for himself his own temple from the substance of the Virgin and came forth from her a man in all that could be externally discerned, while interiorly he was true God. Therefore he kept his Mother a virgin even after her childbearing" (*Against Those Who Do Not Wish to Confess That the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God* 4 [430 A.D.]).

St. Pope Leo I: "His [Christ's] origin is different, but his [human] nature is the same. Human usage and custom were lacking, but by divine power a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bore, and Virgin she remained" (*Sermons* 22:2 [A.D. 450]).

St. Justin Martyr: "[Jesus] became man by the Virgin so that the course which was taken by disobedience in the beginning through the agency of the serpent might be also the very course by which it would be put down. Eve, a virgin and undefiled, conceived the word of the serpent and bore disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary received faith and joy when the angel Gabriel announced to her the glad tidings that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her, for which reason the Holy One being born of her is the Son of God. And she replied 'Be it done unto me according to your word' [Luke 1:38]" (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* 100 [A.D. 155]).

St. Irenaeus: "Consequently, then, Mary the Virgin is found to be obedient, saying, 'Behold, O Lord, your handmaid; be it done to me according to your word.' Eve, however, was disobedient, and, when yet a virgin, she did not obey. Just as she, who was then still a virgin although she had Adam for a husband—for in paradise they were both naked but were not ashamed; for, having been created only a short time, they had no understanding of the procreation of children, and it was necessary that they first come to maturity before beginning to multiply—having become disobedient, was made the cause of death for herself and for the whole human race; so also Mary, betrothed to a man but nevertheless still a virgin, being obedient, was made the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race. . . . Thus, the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary. What the virgin Eve had bound in unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosed through faith" (*Against Heresies* 3:22:24 [189 A.D.]).

For more Early Church writings on the Virgin Mary, see:

www.catholic.com/library/Mary_Ever_Virgin.asp

www.catholic.com/library/Mary_Full_of_Grace.asp

www.catholic.com/library/Mary_Ever_Virgin.asp

www.catholic.com/library/Mary_Mother_of_God.asp

www.catholic.com/library/Intercession_of_the_Saints.asp

www.scripturecatholic.com/blessed_virgin_mary.html

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS:

Mary, the Queen of Heaven, is always leading people right to her Son, Jesus. God bestowed on her an overabundance of grace, which she stands ready to distribute to any one of us. All we have to do is ask. Jesus smiles whenever we honor His Mother; for Jesus honored her, too. For the commandments tell us, "Honor your father and your mother." Mary will be the mother of all in heaven. Pope John Paul II, for one, entrusted his life to Mary's care.

When Mary appeared to the children in Fatima, Portugal, she called herself "The Lady of the Rosary."

She promised the children a miracle so that all would believe. A crowd of 70,000 showed up to see the Miracle of the Sun. But the point is, the rosary is one of the strong prayers we have.

A rosary is no farther than the nearest Catholic shop, online shop, or rectory.

The Fifteen Promises of Mary to Christians Who Recite the Rosary

1. Whoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the rosary shall receive signal graces.
2. I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the rosary.
3. The rosary shall be a powerful armour against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.
4. It will cause virtue and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the hearts of men from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire of eternal things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.
5. The soul which recommends itself to me by the recitation of the rosary shall not perish.
6. Whoever shall recite the rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of its sacred mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice, he shall not perish by an unprovided death; if he be just he shall remain in the grace of God, and become worthy of eternal life.
7. Whoever shall have a true devotion for the rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.
8. Those who are faithful to recite the rosary shall have during their life and at their death the light of God and the plentitude of His graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the merits of the saints in paradise.
9. I shall deliver from purgatory those who have been devoted to the rosary.
10. The faithful children of the rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in heaven.
11. You shall obtain all you ask of me by the recitation of the rosary.
12. All those who propagate the holy rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.
13. I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the rosary shall have for intercessors the entire celestial court during their life and at the hour of death.
14. All who recite the rosary are my sons, and brothers of my only son Jesus Christ.
15. Devotion of my rosary is a great sign of predestination.

(Given to St. Dominic and Blessed Alan) Imprimatur: +Patrick J. Hayes, D.D.,
Archbishop of New York

Hail Mary, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among 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.

CHAPTER 15 – "Now We Are Divided"

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who were the key players in the Protestant Reformation?
2. Who were the key players in the Catholic Reformation?
3. Besides the Catholic Church, what other Church has all seven sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the Real Presence of the Eucharist?
4. What percent of the world population is Christian?
5. What percent of the Christian population is Catholic?
6. What did the Council of Trent (1545-63) do to show it was serious about eliminating abuses that had crept into the Church?
7. If a Jehovah Witness denied to you that Jesus was God, how would you answer the charge? (See Jn 10:30-33, Jn 1:1, Jn 10:38, Jn 14:8-12, Jn 12:45, , Col 2:9, Jn 20:28, Acts 20:28)
8. What common beliefs to Catholics and Protestants have?
9. What common beliefs do Christians and Muslims have?
10. On which Apostle did Christ build His Church? (see Mt 16:18)
11. What are some of the stride toward Christian unity that have been made in recent years/decades?
12. What efforts did Pope John Paul 11 and Pope Benedict XVI made towards unity?
13. With so many religions to choose from, why choose Christianity? How do we know that the Catholic Church contains the fullness of Christian teaching?
14. The Catholic Church is not only the only religion that was founded by God, but the only religion that even *claims* to be founded by God. The Church is 2,000 years old, and will still be here when Jesus comes again. Reflect on the awesomeness of this gift.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

The Catholic Controversy by St. Francis de Sales

Roman Catholics and Evangelicals by Norm Geisler and Ralph MacKenzie

Answering Islam by Norm Geisler

How the Reformation Happened by Hilaire Belloc

Apologia Pro Vita Sua John Henry Newman's classic

There We Stood, Here We Stand: 11 Lutherans Rediscover their Catholic Roots

Beginning Apologetics I: How to Explain & Defend the Catholic Faith (booklet by Father Frank Chacon and Jim Burnham)

The Early Church by Henry Chadwick

On Being Catholic by Thomas Howard

Evangelical is Not Enough by Thomas Howard

Catholicism and Fundamentalism by Karl Keating

Rome Sweet Home by Scott & Kimberly Hahn

One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic: The Early Church was The Catholic Church by Kenneth D. Whitehead

Salvation Is from the Jews by Roy H. Schoeman

Beginning Apologetics 2: How to Answer Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons by Father Frank Chacon and Jim Burnham
The Russian Church and the Papacy by Vladimir Soloviev

HELPFUL ENTRIES FROM THE ONLINE CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA

The Reformation www.newadvent.org/cathen/12700b.htm
The Counter Reformation www.newadvent.org/cathen/04437a.htm
Martin Luther www.newadvent.org/cathen/09438b.htm
John Calvin www.newadvent.org/cathen/03195b.htm
Ulrich Zwingli www.newadvent.org/cathen/15772a.htm
Anglicanism www.newadvent.org/cathen/01498a.htm
Mormonism www.newadvent.org/cathen/10570c.htm
Unitarians www.newadvent.org/cathen/15154b.htm
Eastern Schism www.newadvent.org/cathen/13535a.htm
Eastern Churches www.newadvent.org/cathen/05230a.htm
Greek Church www.newadvent.org/cathen/06752a.htm
Hinduism www.newadvent.org/cathen/07358b.htm
Islam www.newadvent.org/cathen/08190a.htm
Mohammed www.newadvent.org/cathen/10424a.htm

HELPFUL WEB SITES

<http://www.stillcatholic.com/CATHREL.htm> (Other Religions)
<http://www.stillcatholic.com/PROTBooks.htm> (Apologetics Book Shelf)
www.catholic.com (Catholic Answers - differences between Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism)

SCRIPTURE

Where does the Bible say the Church must be one?

John 10:16: So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.

John 17:17-23: As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be consecrated in truth. "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me.

Eph. 4:4-6: There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all

Also see: Rom 16:17, I Cor 1:10, Phil2:2, Rom 15:5, 1 Cor 12:13, Rom 12:5, Col 3:15.

WHAT DOES THE CATECHISM SAY ABOUT SCHISM AND UNITY?

In fact, "in this one and only Church of God from its very beginnings there arose certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly censures as damnable. But in subsequent centuries much more serious dissensions appeared and large communities became separated from full communion with the Catholic Church - for which, often enough, men of both sides were to blame."²⁶⁹ The ruptures that wound the unity of Christ's Body - here we must distinguish heresy, apostasy, and schism²⁷⁰ - do not occur without human sin:

Where there are sins, there are also divisions, schisms, heresies, and disputes.

Where there is virtue, however, there also are harmony and unity, from which arise the one heart and one soul of all believers.²⁷¹

"However, one cannot charge with the sin of the separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church."²⁷²

819 "Furthermore, many elements of sanctification and of truth"²⁷³ are found outside the visible confines of the Catholic Church: "the written Word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope, and charity, with the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit, as well as visible elements."²⁷⁴ Christ's Spirit uses these Churches and ecclesial communities as means of salvation, whose power derives from the fullness of grace and truth that Christ has entrusted to the Catholic Church. All these blessings come from Christ and lead to him,²⁷⁵ and are in themselves calls to "Catholic unity."²⁷⁶

Toward unity

820 "Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time."²⁷⁷ Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her. This is why Jesus himself prayed at the hour of his Passion, and does not cease praying to his Father, for the unity of his disciples: "That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, . . . so that the world may know that you have sent me."²⁷⁸ The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit.²⁷⁹

821 Certain things are required in order to respond adequately to this call:

- a permanent *renewal* of the Church in greater fidelity to her vocation; such renewal is the driving-force of the movement toward unity;²⁸⁰
- *conversion of heart* as the faithful "try to live holier lives according to the Gospel";²⁸¹ for it is the unfaithfulness of the members to Christ's gift which causes divisions;
- *prayer in common*, because "change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name 'spiritual ecumenism';"²⁸²
- *fraternal knowledge of each other*;²⁸³
- *ecumenical formation* of the faithful and especially of priests;²⁸⁴

- *dialogue* among theologians and meetings among Christians of the different churches and communities;²⁸⁵
- *collaboration* among Christians in various areas of service to mankind.²⁸⁶
"Human service" is the idiomatic phrase.

822 Concern for achieving unity "involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike."²⁸⁷ But we must realize "that this holy objective - the reconciliation of all Christians in the unity of the one and only Church of Christ - transcends human powers and gifts." That is why we place all our hope "in the prayer of Christ for the Church, in the love of the Father for us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit."²⁸⁸

WHAT DID THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF THE CHURCH TO BE ONE?

St. Cyprian of Carthage: "You cannot have God for your Father if you do not have the Church for your mother. . . . God is one and Christ is one, and his Church is one; one is the faith, and one is the people cemented together by harmony into the strong unity of a body. . . . If we are the heirs of Christ, let us abide in the peace of Christ; if we are the sons of God, let us be lovers of peace" (*The Unity of the Catholic Church*, c. 250 A.D.).

St. Cyprian also wrote: "The Lord says to Peter: 'I say to you,' he says, 'that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not overcome it. And to you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven . . . ' [Matt. 16:18–19]. On him [Peter] he builds the Church, and to him he gives the command to feed the sheep [John 21:17], and although he assigns a like power to all the apostles, yet he founded a single chair [*cathedra*], and he established by his own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were that also which Peter was [i.e., apostles], but a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and **one chair**. . . . If someone does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he imagine that he still holds the faith? **If he [should] desert the chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, can he still be confident that he is in the Church?**" (*The Unity of the Catholic Church* 4; 1st edition [c. 250 A.D.]

What did St. Hillary say in the 4th century about the importance of Christ's followers being one?

St. Hillary: "In the Scriptures our people are shown to be made one; so that just as many grains collected into one and ground and mingled together, make one loaf, so in Christ, who is the heavenly Bread, we know there is one body, in which our whole company is joined and united." (Treatise 62, 13, 4th century)

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Pray for Christian unity. Remember, Jesus, Himself said He wanted his flock to be One. Next time you are at Mass in a different country, reflect on the fact that even though the Mass may be in a different language, it is the same Mass all over the world. Not only that, but is the same Jesus that Catholics receive at Communion no matter on which continent we worship. How does the Eucharist unite us to Jesus? and to the whole Body of Christ, i.e. the Church?

Catholics are thankful that evangelical Protestants have lent a generous hand to the pro-life movement. What else do we have to be thankful for in our Protestant brothers and sisters?

Billy Graham was one of the most renowned evangelical Protestant preachers in the world when he retired. What are some reasons many Catholics admire Billy Graham? How are members of other Christian denominations incorporated, although perhaps not as fully as possible, into the Body of Christ by virtue of their Baptism? Remember, as long as a follower is baptized and believes that Jesus is God and died and rose for our sins, he or she is regarded as a Christian by the Catholic Church.

Restoring peace within our own families and circles can contribute to the unity of the whole Church. Are there gestures of kindness or charity we can think of that could help break down barriers to peace in our own families or communities? Remember Jesus' commands us to pray for our enemies.