

INVITING CATHOLICS HOME

A MINISTRY OF
 Saint
Brendan
THE NAVIGATOR

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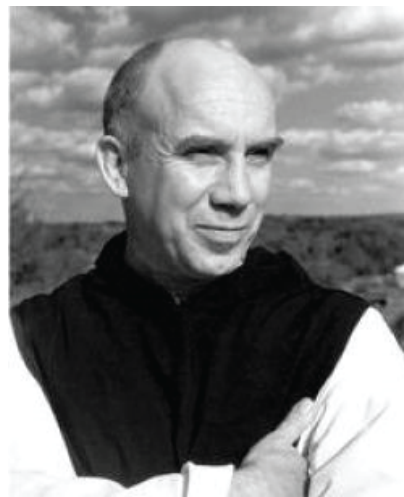
THE SEEKER'S PRAYER

My God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore, I will trust you always and everywhere though I may seem to be lost in the shadow of death. I will not fear because you are ever with me and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

~ Thomas Merton



Thomas Merton (1915–1968)

A Trappist monk, was one of the most well-known Catholic writers of the 20th century. He was the author of more than 60 books, including the story of his conversion, Seven Story Mountain, a modern spiritual classic.



The Parable of the Lost Sheep Luke 15:1-10

The tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. **2** But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." **3** Then Jesus told them this parable: **4** "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? **5** And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders **6** and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' **7** I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

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Prayers



Prayer before Mass

Eternal Father, we humbly offer Thee our poor presence and that of the whole of humanity from the beginning to the end of the world at all the Masses that ever have or ever will be offered. We offer Thee all the pains, sufferings, prayers, sacrifices, and joys of our lives, in union with those of our dear Lord Jesus here on earth. May the Most precious Blood of Christ, all His blood and wounds and agony save us, through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Amen.

After Receiving Holy Communion

O Jesus, I believe that Thou art truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. Although my eyes and tongue tell me that I have received only bread, yet my faith tells me that I have received Thy Body and Blood. I believe, Lord; help Thou my unbelief. I adore Thee as my God and my Savior. Amen.

Prayer after Mass

Soul of Christ, Sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within Thy wounds hide me. Suffer me not to be separated from Thee. From the malignant enemy defend me. In the hour of death call me, and bid me come to Thee, that with Thy saints I may praise Thee forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer to Jesus Christ Crucified

My good and dear Jesus, I kneel before You, asking You most earnestly to engrave upon my heart a deep and lively faith, hope and charity with true repentance for my sins, and a firm resolve to make amends. As I reflect upon Your five wounds, and dwell upon them with deep compassion and grief, I recall good Jesus the words the prophet David spoke long ago concerning Yourself: "They have pierced my hands and my feet, they have counted all my bones!"

Examination of Conscience

What sins have I committed of thought, word, deed/omission, against God, neighbor & self?

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins, because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, who are good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life. Amen.

An Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that You are one God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that Your Divine Son became man and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because You revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

My Little Prayer Process from Dynamic Catholic

Eternal Father, we humbly offer Thee our poor presence and that of the whole of humanity from the begin

1. Thank God for whomever and whatever you are most grateful today.
2. Think about yesterday. Talk to God about times when you were and were not the-best-version-of-yourself.
3. What do you think God is trying to say to you today? Talk to him about that.
4. Ask God to forgive you for anything you have done wrong and to fill your heart with peace.
5. Talk to God about some way he is inviting you to change and grow.
6. Pray for the other people in your life by asking God to guide them and watch over them.
7. Pray the Our Father.

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Prayers



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom
come; Thy will be done on earth as it is
in heaven. Give us this day our daily
bread; and forgive us our trespasses as
we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but
deliver us from evil.
Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with
thee; blessed art 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.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the
beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Angel of God

Angel of God, my guardian dear,
to whom His love entrusts me here,
ever this day be at my side to light and guard,
to rule and guide.
Amen.

Prayer before Meals

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy gifts,
which we are about to receive,
from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer after Meals

We give Thee thanks, Almighty God, for
all Thy benefits, who lives and reigns
forever. And may the souls of the faithful
departed, through the mercy of God,
rest in peace.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our
protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God,
cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl
about the world seeking the ruin of souls.

The Angelus (at Noon)

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.
R. And she conceived by the Holy Spirit.
Hail Mary...
V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
R. Be it done unto me according to Thy word.
Hail Mary...
V. And the Word was made flesh.
R. And dwelt among us. Hail Mary...
V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord,
Thy grace into our hearts that we, to whom the
incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by
the message of an angel, may by His Passion and
Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection,
through the same Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

O Holy Spirit, Eternal God with the Father and Son,
who sees all my actions and counts all my steps, from
whom no thought is hidden, enlighten me that I may
clearly see what evil I have done today, and what good
I have left undone. And move my heart that I may
sincerely repent and amend my life.
Amen.

Consecration to the Blessed Mother

O Mary, my Mother and my Queen, I give myself
entirely to thee. And to show my devotion to thee,
I consecrate to thee this day, my eyes, my ears, my
mouth, my heart, and my whole being, without reserve.
Wherefore, O loving Mother, since I am thine,
keep me and guard me as thy property and possession.
Amen.

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WHY CATHOLICS VENERATE MARY

Catholics do NOT "worship" the Blessed Mary, but we do take great pride in venerating her.

Mary is not just a mother like any other mother. She was addressed by a messenger from GOD, the Angel Gabriel, who asked that she consent to be the Mother of GOD.

The words given to Gabriel by the Father: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women" (Luke 1:28). Notice that the first person to begin praising Mary is GOD. She was chosen by GOD, as GOD had chosen Abraham, and Moses, and many prophets before her. She was called, "the Mother of my Lord (which means the mother of my GOD)", by Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth (Luke 1:41-43).

"In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah 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 fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord" (Luke 1:39-45).

Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35-38) and carried the Divine Person of GOD in her womb. Consider that Mary gave birth to a person with two natures, one fully human and one fully divine. Mary retained her perpetual virginity from conception to the birth of her child, and then forever after.

All others have looked up to GOD, but Mary would have looked down upon her child in her arms who was God! Our Creator would have been cared for by Mary for many years. Luke 2:51. Mary lived with the Second Person of the Holy Trinity for 30 years. Jesus taught and stayed with His disciples for only 3 years, but was with His mother much of his life. Mary had started Jesus on His ministry (John 2:3-11) and she was assumed into Heaven, body and soul.

"The Magnificat", the Cantic of Mary, from Luke 1:46-55:

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." Luke 1:46-49

Mary is the only person in the Bible to say "All generations will call me blessed". Mary was also called "Blessed" by the Father in Luke 1:28, and she was twice called "Blessed" by Elizabeth, being filled with the Holy Spirit, in Luke 1:42 and 45. Two persons of the Holy Trinity had already called Mary "Blessed", and we are commanded to do likewise in Luke 1:48. When GOD called Mary "Blessed", He venerated her.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is closely intertwined with all three persons of the Holy Trinity. She is the daughter of the Father. She is the spouse of the Holy Spirit, and she is the mother of the Second Person, Jesus Christ. Jesus was the only person who was able to choose His own mother and he chose Mary.

"Let no one presume to hope for the mercy of GOD who dares to slight or offend GOD's mother."
(Saint Louis de Montfort, "True Devotion to Mary")

Mary



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Mary



Mary conceived her son by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35). The Archangel first told her that her Son was to be the Son of the Most High. However, any devout Jew could be called a son of God. But there was more: the angel told her He would reign over the house of Jacob forever: right then she would know He was to be the Messiah, for Jews then commonly believed the Messiah would reign forever. Finally, the angel said He would be conceived when the Holy Spirit would "overshadow" her. That word, she would know, was the one use to describe the Divine Presence filling the ancient Tabernacle in the desert (Exodus 40:35). Her Son was to be called Son of God "for this reason". So that He was the Son of God in a unique sense. From this alone she likely knew of His divinity, especially when she would add the words of Isaiah 9:5-6 that the Messiah would be "God the Mighty". Even though the Jews found that text hard, she, full of grace, would readily grasp it.

Ever Virgin So this was a virginal conception, that is, without the intervention of a man. Both Matthew and Luke make this clear. If we believe the Gospels, we will understand that readily. The teaching of the Church, already in the oldest creeds, which call her "ever-virgin," tells us she remained a virgin during and after His birth. Some have tried to say the teaching on her virginity was not physical, but just a way of expressing her holiness. But it is more than that: Vatican II (Lumen Gentium # 57) wrote that His birth "did not diminish, but consecrated her virginal integrity." That word "integrity" refers to physical condition.

Therefore when the Gospels speak of the "brothers and sisters" of Jesus, they do not mean other children of Mary. The Hebrew words were very broad, could cover any sort of relationship. For that matter, modern English uses these words even more broadly for members of fraternities and sororities.

Immaculate Conception As a result of this Divine Motherhood, because it was fitting for Her Son, she obtained the great grace of the Immaculate Conception, defined by Pius IX in 1854. This means that from the first instant of conception her soul had sanctifying grace, a share in God's own life, given in anticipation of the future merits of her Son. The angel's greeting to Mary is traditionally translated "Hail, full of grace," but this has been disputed in modern times. Vatican II, Pope John Paul II and others understand the Greek of Luke 1:28, kecharitomeno, to mean "full of grace". The word is a perfect participle, a very strong form. The root verb, charitoo, means to put someone into the state of grace/favor. And especially, the word is used instead of her name, in direct address. This is like saying someone is Mr. Tennis--the ultimate in tennis. So she is Miss Grace, the ultimate in grace. Pius IX, in defining the Immaculate Conception, said that even at the start, her holiness was so great that "none greater under God can be thought of, and no one but God can comprehend it"!

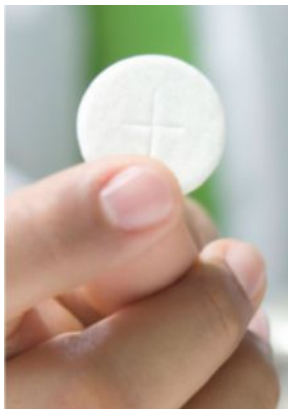
Cooperation in the Redemption One of the oldest teachings of the Church is that Mary is the New Eve. Just as the first Eve really contributed to the disaster of original sin, so Mary the New Eve really contributed to removing it, that is, to redeeming us. She was Mother of the Redeemer precisely insofar as He is our Redeemer. Every Pope since Leo XIII, and Vatican II, in seventeen documents have said that her role in redeeming us extends even to a part in the great sacrifice of Calvary itself! It is a general principle, that if something is taught repeatedly by the Church, even on a level less than a definition, the teaching is infallible.

Mediatrix of All Graces As we would expect, having shared at immense cost in earning all graces, she shares similarly in distributing all of them as Mediatrix of all graces. This truth too has been taught numerous times by a long series of Popes--every Pope from Leo XIII through John XXIII.

Assumption and Queenship At the end of her earthly life, Mary was taken up (assumed) into heaven, body and soul. Pius XII, in defining the Assumption, explained that "Just as the glorious resurrection of Christ was an essential part and final sign of this victory [over sin and death by Calvary] so that struggle [Calvary] which was common to the Blessed Virgin and her Son, had to be closed by the glorification of her virginal body". That is, the struggle, a work common to the two was a common cause. It brought Him glorification; it had to bring the same to her. (In all this it is understood she is subordinate to Him, and really depends on Him for all her ability to do anything at all). As a result, just as He is now King of the Universe, she is Queen of the Universe. "And her kingdom is as vast as that of her Son and God, since nothing is excluded from her dominion" (Pius XII, *Bendito seia*, May 13, 1946).

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WHAT IS CATHOLIC MASS?

The Mass is the sacrifice of Christ. He offered himself once and forever on the cross. It is the Center of our Christian life and the thanks offering that we present to God for His great love toward us. It is not another sacrifice. It is not a repetition. It is the same sacrifice of Jesus that is present. It is a re-presentation of Calvary, memorial, and application of the merits of Christ. The Mass has two parts: the liturgy of the word (after asking for forgiveness of sins) and the liturgy of the Eucharist, which is an offering to the Father by Jesus and by us, because we are also sons of God. To take advantage of the great spiritual fruits that God gives us through the Eucharistic Celebration, we should know it, understand the gestures and symbols, and participate in it with reverence. Here we have an explanation that will help you to better participate in this sacrifice.

When someone wants to show you their affection and friendship, they invite you to their home. There are two important things which occur next: conversation and a meal. In the celebration of the Mass it is Jesus who invites us to participate in his friendship, during which we also encounter these two important moments: conversation, which is when Jesus speaks to us through his Word and we respond with our prayers; and a meal, when Jesus offers us the Eucharistic banquet giving us his Body and Blood. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the most important moment of the Mass. There are three parts to the Liturgy of the Eucharist: the Offertory Rite, the Eucharistic Prayer (which is the nucleus of the whole celebration) and the Rite of Communion.

Before going into the meaning behind each part of the Mass, it's important to understand more clearly these basic principles:

SACRED SCRIPTURE (the Bible, the living WORD of God) + **TRADITION** (putting the WORD into action)
Our understanding of Christian faith comes from both Sacred Scripture and Catholic Church Tradition. Can't have Faith without works (meaning we are living out what we believe).

Scripture (the Bible, the Living Word of God) and Tradition = Divine Revelation = "Deposit of Faith"

Protestants: Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone is all you need, Martin Luther)

Catholics: Actions are the rituals we practice, these become our small "t" traditions

Tradition The Truths of the Faith (Capital "T") = Most Important. We need both Scripture & Tradition.

- Beliefs that never change unless new revelation changes it
- The Bible, the Creed (i.e. One God, Jesus lived, died and was resurrected)
- Truths of our faith cast in stone for all time
- Refers to the Apostolic Tradition or teachings of the Apostles, passed through the Magisterium (the teaching office of a pope or a bishop in union with the pope)
- Doctrines, teachings accepted as true
- Dogma, cannot be denied or disputed. That part of doctrine declaring essential contents of Christianity
- Male only priesthood

tradition (small "t") Fleshed out by practices that are good and may change, important, but...

- Rituals and actions that have particular meaning for particular groups of people
- Things that give richness to our observations but aren't doctrinal...can be changed

Some examples are:

- The solemnities, feast days, observing holy days of obligation, days of fasting and abstinence from meat
- Devotions such as various types of prayer, praying the rosary
- Ornate vestments vs. plain, simple ones, using incense, Mass in Latin or English
- Ringing bells during Mass
- Compulsory celibacy in the priesthood
- Receiving Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue

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The Mass Explained ...from beginning to end

Introductory Rites / Entrance Song: We prepare to begin the mass with the entrance procession. It is a song that unites all of us because people come to Mass from different places, cultures, ages and together sing with one voice, as the body that we are in Christ. We unite to celebrate one of the greatest gifts that Jesus left us: the Eucharist.

Sign of the Cross: The mass itself begins with the sign of the cross and will also end in the same way, when we receive the final blessing. Making the sign of the cross reminds us that we belong to Christ. There is great power in this short prayer. We begin in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit to not only to mention the name of God, but also to put us in His holy presence.

Penitential Rite: In the presence of God, the Church invites us to recognize with humility that we are sinners. Because as Saint Paul says: "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." (Rm 7:15). We can all echo the words of Paul in our own lives... Therefore, at the beginning of the Eucharist we recognize humbly to all our brothers, that we are sinners. To ask for forgiveness to God, we use the words of the blind man who heard that Jesus passed by and knew that he could not be cured himself, but needed the help of God as he began to shout in the middle of the crowd: "Lord, have mercy on me". Thus, with trust in God's mercy, we pray also "Lord have mercy".

Gloria: On Sundays and solemnities we sing this hymn of praise that truly gives glory to God: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect (Opening Prayer): The opening prayer is the moment in which the priest invites the community to pray. At the beginning of the prayer the priest says: "Let us pray" and extends his hands as a sign of appeal. This is a time to gather us all in silence and ask the Lord to help us. At the end of the prayer all we join what the priest asked, saying together: Amen! As the Lord tells us in the Gospel: "Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Mt 18: 19-20). The opening prayer unites us with the universal Church, reminding us that in every corner of the world in which Mass is said our brothers and sisters in Christ will be doing the same thing.

Liturgy of the word: The Lord Jesus, before feeding us with his body and his blood at the table of the sacrifice, feeds us first in the Word of God. Through the readings we hear directly from God who speaks to us.

Readings: The first reading is taken from one of the books of the Old Testament. It is important to meditate on them, because by these words, God was preparing his people for the coming of Christ. As well as preparing us to listen to Jesus. The first reading is always directly related to the Gospel reading. After the first reading, we read the Psalm. The Psalms have always been very important in the history of the Church. When we pray with the Psalms, we pray with the words of God. These are the words that he puts in our mouths so that we know how to express ourselves in prayer. With the Psalms we learn to pray, we learn to speak with God. The second reading is taken from the New Testament: the letters of Saint Paul, or the Catholic Epistles or the book of Hebrews or the Apocalypse. They are the writings of the Apostles. We hear the preaching and writings of the men that Jesus instructed to minister to us when He left. These men were filled with the Holy Spirit and committed to spreading the Good News. There is much insight and wisdom to be gained from these books of the Bible.

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The Mass Explained ...from beginning to end (cont.)

Gospel: In the first reading, God spoke through his prophets, in the second through his Apostles, and now in the Gospel speaks directly through his son Jesus Christ. It is the most important time of the liturgy of the word. We hear directly from Jesus' speaking, teaching, and healing. The word Gospel means "good news" and this good news is not just a message, it is Jesus himself! The best news that ever existed! It is a very important moment, which is why we stand and we sing with joy the Alleluia. The Gospel is proclaimed by the priest. To begin, we make the sign of the cross on our forehead, mouth and chest to symbolize that we receive the word of God in the mind, we confess it with my mouth, and we keep it in the heart.

The Homily: It is not enough to hear the word of God, but that we also need to adequately understand what has been said to us. Homily comes from a Greek word that means "dialogue", "conversation". It is the moment in which the priest explains the proclaimed scripture readings and we able to delve into them.

Presentation of the Gifts: This is the moment in which the bread and wine are brought to the altar, two very simple foods which the priest will offer to God in order that Christ makes himself present in the Eucharist. The simplicity of these foods reminds us of the child who brought Jesus his offerings, five loaves and two fish. It was everything he had, but this smallness, placed in the hands of Jesus, was converted into abundance and sufficed to feed an immense multitude, there were even leftovers. In this way, our simple offerings of bread and wine, placed in the hands of the Lord, will also be converted into the greatest abundance, into the Body and Blood of Christ to feed a great multitude who are hungry for God. In every Mass, we are this multitude. Together with this bread and wine, we also present ourselves to God. We offer him our efforts, sacrifices, joys, and sufferings. We offer him our frailty so that he may do great things with us. When God converts the bread and wine into the Body and Blood, he also converts us, making us better, more like him.

Prayer over the Offerings: After the presentation of the gifts, the priest bows towards the altar and says an inaudible prayer. There are various moments when the priest says inaudible prayers during the Mass. In this occasion he says, "With humble spirit and contrite heart may we be accepted by you, O Lord, and may our sacrifice in your sight this day be pleasing to you, Lord God." It is an important moment because it manifests that when the priest celebrates the Mass, he is praying, not just repeating mechanical gestures, but rather speaking with God.

Preface: This word comes from two Latin words "pre" "factum", which literally means "before the act". It is called this because it is immediately before the most important act of the whole Mass: the Eucharistic Prayer, all the prayers which surround the moment of consecration. In the preface, there is a dialogue with the priest, "Lift up your hearts." "We lift them up to the Lord." In the preface we give thanks to God, we recognize his acts of love and we praise him. All of this truly elevates our hearts. That is the interior attitude to which the liturgy guides us, elevating the heart to be ready for the most important moment: when Christ makes himself present with his Body and Blood. This is why Pope Benedict said: "We ought to lift our hearts up to the Lord not just as a ritual response, but rather as an expression of that which succeeds in a heart which lifts itself and draws others with it."

Sanctus: The Preface ends with this song of praise to God. The lyrics are taken entirely from the Sacred Scriptures. The first part is a song which we heard from the choir of angels that the prophet Isaiah heard singing to God besides his throne. Repeating "Holy" three times reminds us of the three divine persons in the Holy Trinity. The second part is the acclamation of the crowd as Jesus entered Jerusalem mounted on a donkey on Palm Sunday: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." They happily greeted Jesus, the long-awaited king entering his city. In the Mass, we also greet Christ who is about to make himself present before us. Because of this, we can say that the Sanctus is a song of men and angels, which unites us in praise of God.

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The Mass Explained ...from beginning to end (cont.)

Epiclesis: Is the moment in which the Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the offerings of bread and wine which we have presented. At this moment, the priest extends his hands and imposes them over the offerings. Just as the Holy Spirit descended over the Virgin Mary so that she would conceive and Jesus would be made present in her womb, now we invoke the Holy Spirit to descend over these gifts and make Christ present in our midst.

The Institution Narrative & Consecration: We have reached the heart of the Eucharistic Prayers, the most important moment of the Mass. Following the mandate which Jesus gave to his apostles: "Do this in memory of me."; the priest, acting in the person of Christ, says the words of the institution of the Eucharist, the same which Jesus spoke the day of the Last Supper. These words have the power to transform reality. Just as when God said, "Let there be earth", and the earth was made. When Jesus told the paralytic, "Take your mat, rise up, and walk" the paralytic who had never been able to walk, rose to his feet and began to walk. Or when he said to his friend Lazarus after four days in the tomb, "Lazarus come out!" and Lazarus returned to life and left the tomb. As God, when he speaks his Word, creation obeys. In the Mass, when God speaks his Word through the priest: "TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT, FOR THIS IS MY BODY..."; "TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT, FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD..." his word, which is efficacious, transforms reality and the offerings of bread and wine cease to be such and are truly converted into the Body and Blood of Christ; truly his Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity

Our Father: Before receiving communion, the Church invites us to recite the prayer which Christ taught us. Saint Cyprian said, "What prayer would the Father hear more gladly than that in which he hears the voice of his only Son, Jesus Christ?" When we pray the Our Father, the Father recognizes the voice of his Only Begotten Son in us. It is this way because when we pray the Our Father, we are not praying with our words, but rather with the words of God, with the same words with which Jesus taught us to pray. The prayer is not my Father, but OUR Father. It is an invitation to love between us, to brotherhood, to sisterhood, to reconciliation. Pope Francis has said it very clearly: "This is a prayer which cannot be recited with enemies in one's heart, with hatred for another." It is a prayer which prepares our hearts because it invites us to communion.

Communion: How many times have we said, "I am dying of hunger!" Our body rejects the experience of having an empty stomach so strongly that we express ourselves this way. But we have an even more profound hunger: the hunger for God. Christ makes himself food because he does not want to leave us empty. He has come that we might have life and have it abundantly. It is the moment of Communion. It is when the priest comes forward to distribute the Eucharistic food. It is also called communion because upon receiving the Body of Christ, we enter into an intimate and profound communion with Him. When someone eats something, that which is eaten becomes part of the body and becomes one with the person and no one can separate the two. When we receive the Body of Christ, something different occurs, not only does it become part of us, but above all, we become what we eat, we become Christ-like, we become more like Jesus. This is true food, the food of eternal life, he who receives it will live forever.

Final Blessing and Dismissal: The Mass ends as we begin it, with the Sign of the Cross. We are able to go in peace because we have seen God, we have encountered Him and we are renewed to continue with the mission which God has given us. At the end of Mass, the priest gives us the Final Blessing, the Benediction. The word "Benediction" comes from two Latin words "bene" "dicere" which mean "to speak well" of someone. Generally, when someone speaks well of us, it neither makes us better nor worse persons. But when God speaks well of us, his Word does change us distinctly. It gives us the grace to fight the good fight. Thus ends the Mass, and we are ready to continue forward in our Christian lives.

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The Art & Architecture of St. Brendan Church



St Brendan



Building shape like the prow of a ship

From the earliest days of the Roman Catholic Church, Christian art has shown a strong symbolic element. Once of the periods richest in symbolism was the late second and third centuries. During this period of early Christian art, frescoes found in catacombs and household objects produced for religious patrons could only be interpreted completely by “believers”. An example, of this early symbolic art is the use of the Good Shepherd as a way of representing Christ the Savior. A non-believer would not understand that the boy painted on the walls of the catacombs with a lamb across his shoulders represented the leader of this new religion. The viewer would need to know the reference Jesus made to himself: “I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for His Sheep”.

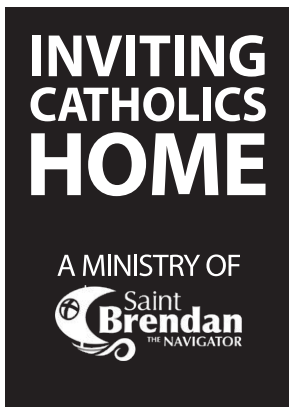
Sometimes the Good Shepherd figure would be seen with a woman in a praying posture who represented Christ’s spouse, the Church, praying for a departed believer. The Shepherd is also shown carrying a small pot, alluding to the Eucharistic feast. More often, however, the Good Shepherd and His sheep are alone – the symbolic art of this period was, in a true sense, a type of shorthand. Complex messages and signals were conveyed within a fresco or a diptych that appear quite spare and simple on the surface. Ernst Kitzinger in *Byzantine Art in the Making* coined the term “signitive images” to refer to these abbreviated forms that carried a larger message. Although this shortened method of communication had been occasionally used before, the early Christians brought a new intensity to the form, painting small “stand-alone” images throughout the catacombs of the period that together contributed to larger themes, such as deliverance and eternal life through Christ.

The variety of these artistic symbols found in the catacombs, medallions, bowls, ivory book covers, and sarcophagi of the day were not great. Besides the Good Shepherd, common subjects include the peacock, a symbol of resurrection; the chl-rho, the first 2 Greek letters in the name of Christ, which were superimposed to form a cross; and the story of Jonah the whale, another reference to the resurrection, which also connected the Old Testament of the Bible to the life of Jesus. Since the symbols served as signs, pointing the way to larger themes, only a limited repertoire was needed. In fact, the repletion of symbols seemed to lend power and resonance to the art of this period. The sparseness of the forms and the magnitude of the message seemed to complement each other.

The condensed art of the earliest Christian period was soon out-shadowed by a more representational and classic form. The figure of Jesus soon began appearing as an artistic motif, first as a beardless young man among his bearded apostles and later as a martyr hanging from a cross. The floodgates were opened artistically, and the supply of subjects was endless: Jesus’ mother Mary, St. Peter and the early leaders of the Church, the miracles performed by Jesus during His lifetime; to name just a few – began to overshadow this “ciphered” form. The use of symbolic religious art has never completely disappeared, however, and can still be seen in some of the art and architecture produced for the Roman Catholic community. A telling example is St. Brendan Church in Hilliard, Ohio, which displays an extensive use of symbolism throughout its entire structure.

A starting point to understanding these symbolic features in St. Brendan Church is to know the story of St. Brendan, a 6th century Irish Monk, who as legend has it, left his settled religious community to find the “Isles of the Blessed. One of these expeditions allegedly lasted for at least 5 years during which the abbot sailed to the Canaries and the coast of Greenland. It is uncertain if St. Brendan made it as far as the Scottish isles, as well as 2 other countries in the region. It is also documented that he led a community of 3,000 monks and exercised great influence on the people of his time.

The travels of St. Brendan are referenced in the roof line of the Hilliard Church that bears his name. The front section of the building, which contains the main doors into the church, juts out like a prow of a great ship and the believers who enter the building, in a sense, join St. Brendan on his spiritual journey.



Art/Architecture (continued)



St. B's tent-like ceiling



Ark of the Covenant



St Brendan Alter



5 Engraved Alter Crosses



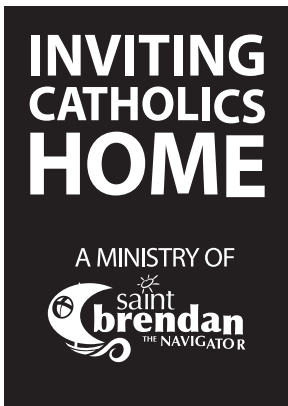
Tabernacle

The interior liturgical space of St. Brendan Church, however, is not reminiscent of a boat but rather a tent, projecting upward in wood and stone to form a conical shape above the congregation, with a small circular opening at the top. The tent structure recalls the tents used by the Hebrews when they wandered for 40 years in the desert. The Ark of the Covenant, the center of Israelite worship that housed 2 tablets containing the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai was also placed in a tent, and thus God shared his people's journey. Later, when David brought the Ark to Jerusalem, he placed it in a tent to recall the time of wandering in the desert. The Ark remained in the tent until Solomon built the temple. The tent that forms the sacred space at St. Brendan is a link to Old Testament heritage. St. Paul, a tentmaker by trade before becoming an apostle further enriches this symbol of a tent in 2 Corinthians. Just as the tent provides a temporary dwelling for the Ark in the Old Testament, in Chapter 5, verse 1, Paul tells his readers that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven. Paul goes on to assure believers that, while they are weighed down in this life by the tent of existence, eventually they will be one with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:2-5). The tent structure in St. Brendan can also then be seen as a reminder to the congregation of God's promise of eternal life in Him after they leave their temporal existence.

In the sacred area of the church enclosed by the tent structure, the eye focuses on the large altar that juts out on a small platform into a semicircle arrangement of seats used by the congregation. Made of 5 tons of dark gray granite, the altar is the center of attention in St. Brendan. The interior is otherwise spare in its decorations. The square top of the altar rests on a base that is carved out in the form of a triangle at its center. The structure speaks to the 2 functions the altar performs; it is a symbolic table where the last supper is reenacted and it represents a tomb. The altar is a sanctified table in the Catholic Church, it is the table at which the presiding minister stands placed the bread and wine and their vessels and the book. The large piece of stone seems to represent the weight of the rite that is enacted upon it and the central place it holds in the Liturgy. On the surface of the altar, 5 crosses are engraved into the stone, one placed at each of its corners and one in the center. These 5 crosses represent the 5 wounds of Jesus. The crosses serve as reminders of what came after the Last Supper – Jesus' crucifixion and death for the sins of the world.

The triangular indention at the altars base points to the once common practice of placing the altar over the tomb of a martyr or leader in the church. Often stairs on either side of these alters would lead down to the crypt. This structure called a *confessio*, signified that the Church is founded on Christ and fertilized by the blood of its martyrs. "The Church is a living organism", said Msgr. Joseph Fete, chair of the Sub-Commission on Environment and Art for Catholic Worship in the diocese of Columbus. Msgr. Fete explains that the Catholic Church still symbolically carries on this practice by placing relics of martyrs in the floor beneath the altar. At St. Brendan, a small carved out area at the base of the altar is the shorthand symbol for the confession and its message. The altar as a whole unites the themes of the Eucharist, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and the heritage of the faith that has conveyed these messages down to the current day.

Another focal object in St. Brendan is the tabernacle, which stands to the right and slightly behind the altar. An 8 foot vertical structure made of light-colored stone contains a central box, the tabernacle, which houses the Blessed Sacrament. The tabernacle is surrounded by 4 areas where the stone is cut away, forming a cross. Former pastor, Msgr. Maroon credits the inspiration for the structure to Stanley Kubrick's film, 2001: A Space Odyssey in which a stone monolith seems to possess an almost divine significance. The stone structure is awe-inspiring, in a basic, simple way. The use of a science fiction film element as a stimulus for the tabernacle iconography is equally noteworthy. The designers of St. Brendan incorporated allusions to the Old Testament in the tent shape of the central portion of the church, but the tabernacle is evidence that they did not feel bound solely to borrow from the past just as with the early Christian motif of the Shepherd, images from daily life are used as symbols as well.



Art/Architecture (continued)

Although not as dominant as the features discussed above, other symbolic features exist in the art and architecture of St. Brendan. These secondary elements are often more traditional in nature, such as the small but colorful statues: the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph and St. Anthony. There are the wooden Stations of the Cross, carved by the founding pastor of the parish, the Rev. Michael Wellnitz, in 1956. The Stations of the Cross serve not only to guide believers through the passion of Jesus, but also function as artifacts of the parish's past.

Perhaps the most striking of these traditional symbols is the statue of St. Brendan in the church's vestibule. A modern sculpture made by Pennsylvania artist Trina Paulus, the fiberglass structure depicts a golden St. Brendan in his ship. St. Brendan is shown as a young warrior fearfully gazing into the distance, while standing – at the prow of an abbreviated boat. Msgr. Maroon said that Paulus' sculpture is interactive – often the children of the parish climbed into the stern of the ship.

As a whole, St. Brendan Church represents a dramatic departure from the more common, traditional Catholic structures found in America; structures typified in Columbus by St. Joseph Cathedral on E. Broad Street. How was such a dramatic departure from form possible within religion where dramatic change is not the norm? The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council is in large part, responsible for this shift. Vatican II, which began in Rome on October 11, 1962, was initially convened by Pope John XXIII to modernize the Church, revitalize Catholic spirituality, unite all Christians, and strengthen the Church's mission to all people. The Council's revolutionary effect was felt down to the way Mass was celebrated and the appearance of the buildings – in which Catholic congregations gathered.

The altar is one element at St. Brendan that could only have been built after Vatican II. Msgr. Marron said, "Churches before Vatican II had high alters, the priest was seen as the military general leading his people to heaven. Vatican II put the emphasis elsewhere. The priest fulfills the function of gathering the faithful around the table of the Lord. The predominance of stone and wood in St. Brendan can also be attributed to this Council. As Msgr. Fete noted, Vatican II emphasized "authenticity of materials" that was seen as going hand-in-hand with the worshiping in spirit and in truth to which Catholics are called. Another document, Environment and Art, which was issued by the United States Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy in 1978, was also relied upon heavily during the design of St. Brendan.

The most powerful experience of the sacred is found in the celebration and the persons celebrating. That was at the heart of the earliest liturgies. Evidence of this is found in their architectural floor plans which were designed as general gathering spaces, spaces which allowed the whole assembly to be part of the action. The tabernacle structure, which is based on a science fiction movie, seems to find justification in this document as well. A passage of contemporary art state, "of liturgy were to have incorporated only the acceptable art of the past, conversion, commitment and tradition would have ceased to live. The assembly should, therefore be equally unhesitating in searching out, patronizing and using the arts and media of past and present." The Catholic Church is in effect authorizing the creation of new symbolism, rooted in the life experiences of its people as a whole.



Virgin Mary Statue



St. Joseph Statue



St. Brendan Statue



St. Anthony Statue



Stations of the Cross



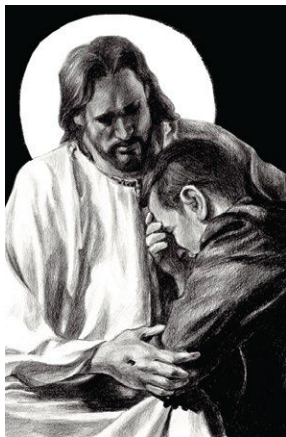
2001 Space Odyssey Monolith

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Forgiveness & Reconciliation



SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (in Jesus' own words)

"Peace be with you...As the Father has sent me, so I send you.

Then he breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them:

if you hold them bound, they are held bound."

– John 20:21-23

WHY SHOULD I GO TO CONFESSION?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF GOING TO CONFESSION?

The Sacrament of Confession "washes us clean" and renews us in Christ.

1. CONFESSION HELPS US TO BETTER "KNOW THYSELF".

St. Augustine and countless other saints and doctors of the Church talk about the importance of knowing ourselves well. Through coming to know ourselves better, we realize how fallen we are, and how badly we need God's help and grace to get through life. Frequent Confession helps remind us to rely on God and help rid us of our sins.

2. CONFESSION HELPS US OVERCOME VICE.

The grace we receive from the Sacrament of Confession helps us combat our faults and failings and break our habits of vice much more easily and expediently than we could otherwise do without sacramental grace.

3. CONFESSION BRING US PEACE.

Guilt from the sins we commit can make us feel all mixed up inside and cause us to lose our peace and joy. When we hear God's forgiving words to us from the lips of the priest in Confession, a burden is lifted off our shoulders and we can again feel the peace of heart and soul that comes from being in a good relationship with God.

4. CONFESSION HELPS US BECOME MORE SAINTLY, MORE LIKE JESUS.

Jesus was perfectly humble, perfectly generous, perfectly patient, perfectly loving – perfectly everything. Don't you wish you could be as humble, generous, patient, and loving as Jesus? Saints throughout history have felt that way too, and they have frequented the Sacrament of Reconciliation to help transform them into people who are more like Christ. Little images of Christ – that's what saints are.

5. CONFESSION MAKES OUR WILL STRONGER.

Every time we experience the Sacrament of Confession, God strengthens our will and our self-control to be able to resist the temptations that confront us in our lives. We become more resolute to follow God's will and not our own whims.

The words of absolution are truly beautiful: *□ I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. □ Jesus is waiting to forgive you □ all you have to do is ask. Don't miss our any longer on the healing power of confession.*

Act of Contrition

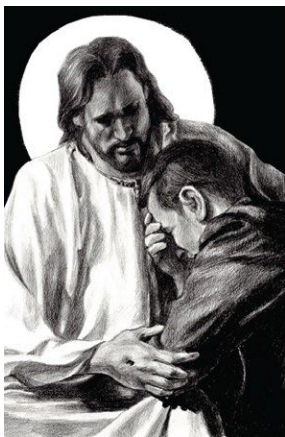
O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Health and the pains of Hell, but most of all because they offend You, my God, Who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of thy grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen

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Forgiveness & Reconciliation



How to Make a Powerful Reconciliation by Father Mathias Thelen (Forgiveness)

1. MASKS OFF. It's OK to struggle. Be humble before Jesus, bear your heart in confession
2. STOP BLAMING OTHERS FOR THE WAY YOU ARE FEELING.
Forgive so you can deal with your feelings. Jesus is the only one who can fulfill us.
3. FOREGIVENESS. Pray, feel the pain and then forgive.
4. STOP CONDEMNING YOURSELF. You have no right to accuse and condemn yourself...
when Jesus sets us free, we must love and forgive ourselves
5. INVITE JESUS TO KNOW YOUR GREATEST FEARS. Identify your fears and talk to Jesus about them.
6. GO TO YOUR PLACE OF PAIN & ASK JESUS FOR HELP & FORGIVENESS.
7. ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR HELP. What sins have I committed? The power of healing is in Reconciliation.

6 Steps to a Good Confession

1. Examine your conscience – what sins have you committed since your last good confession
2. Be sincerely sorry for your sins
3. Confess your sins to the priest
4. Make certain that you confess all your mortal sins and the number of them
5. After your confession, do the penance the priest gives you
6. Pray daily for strength to avoid occasions of sin, especially for those sins you were just absolved from

Mortal Sin

A mortal sin (Latin: peccatum mortale), in Catholic theology, is a gravely sinful act, which can lead to damnation if a person does not repent of the sin before death. A sin is considered to be "mortal" when its quality is such that it leads to a separation of that person from God's saving grace.

In Roman Catholic moral theology, a mortal sin requires that all of the following conditions are met:

1. Its subject matter must be grave.
2. It must be committed with full knowledge (and awareness) of the sinful action and gravity of the offense.
3. It must be committed with deliberate and complete consent.^[5]

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines grave matter:

1858. Grave matter is specified by the **Ten Commandments**, corresponding to the answer of Jesus to the rich young man: "Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and your mother." The gravity of sins is more or less great: murder is graver than theft. One must also take into account who is wronged: violence against parents is in itself graver than violence against a stranger.^[6]

Venial Sin

According to Roman Catholicism, a venial sin is a lesser sin that does not result in a complete separation from God and eternal damnation in Hell as an unrepented mortal sin would.^{[1][2]} A venial sin consists in acting as one should not, without the actual incompatibility with the state of grace that a mortal sin implies; they do not break one's friendship with God, but injure it.^[3]

One can arrive at what kind of sin, for example, was committed, by asking the following three questions:

1. Did the act involve a grave matter?
2. Was the act committed with full knowledge of the wrongdoing that had been done in the act?
3. Was the act done with full consent of the will?

If all three questions are answered in the affirmative, the criteria for a mortal sin have been met. If any one of the three questions are answered in the negative, only the criteria for a venial sin have been met. In cases of doubt regarding any of these three questions, it is assumed that the criteria for a mortal sin were not met. Each venial sin that one commits adds to the penance that one must do. Penance left undone during life converts to punishment in Purgatory.

A venial sin can be left unconfessed so long as there is some purpose of amendment. One receives from the sacrament of reconciliation the grace to help overcome venial, as well as mortal sins. It is recommended that confession of venial sins be made.^{[6][7]} Venial sins require some kind of penance.

PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY

Principle #1 – Do Good, Avoid Evil

Principle #2 – We Can Never do Evil to Bring About Good

- The end does not justify the means
- No matter how good the good, you cannot do an evil
- You cannot kill one innocent person even if it would save a whole town

Principle #3 – We Must Follow Our Consciences

- However, we also have a prior obligation to correctly form our conscience
- Conscience must never be set in opposition to moral law/Magisterium of the Catholic Church. CCC 2039

Principle #4 – The Principle of Double Effect

This Principle says that an act that is good (or at least not evil), but that has an evil side effect, may be done only under the following conditions:

1. The act itself must be good or at least morally neutral.
2. The evil effect must not be directly willed, but only foreseen and tolerated.
3. The good effect must not be the result of the evil effect (good is the result, evil is the indirect result).
4. The good desired must be equal or outweigh the evil effect. CCC 1737

Principle #5 – Formal or Material Cooperation with Evil

- **Formal** - assisting another's wrong doing and approving it. It is always wrong.
- **Material** - assisting another's wrong doing while not approving it.

It is only OK or allowed under the same conditions as Principle of Double Effect.

Conditions for Material Cooperation:

1. The act itself must be good or at least morally neutral.
2. One cannot share in the evil intention.
3. Action cannot cause evil effect.
4. Sufficient reasons must exist to allow the evil effect.

Principle #6 – The Principle of Totality

- For the sake of overall health, we can mutilate, modify or remove an organ or body part
- Does not include contraceptive sterilization

Principle #7 – Choosing the Lesser of Two Evils

- Evils must be UNAVOIDABLE
- Plane crash may be unavoidable. Plane is going down. Try to hit a house versus a stadium full of people.

Principle #8 – Minimizing a Greater Evil

Working to limit the harm caused by an unavoidable evil, i.e. Catholic Politician

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FORMING A CORRECT CONSCIENCE

In Catholicism, a **formal conscience** is one that is built upon through learning and experience, where as an **informed conscience** is one that is researched and thought out through logic and reason. A person with a well-formed and well-informed conscience is less likely to reject God's law.

A **good conscience** can be revealed through natural law (informed) or through the teaching of Jesus Christ. A conscience can be educated in God's work and obtained through the practices of Jesus.

Pope John Paul II described a **correct conscience** as one that involves a judgment that is in accordance with objective truth. An **erroneous conscience**, involves a judgement that is purely subjective and thought to be true when it is not.

Catholic teaching **encourages** people to live as disciples of Christ, without ignoring concerns for human dignity, such as poverty or racism. A **well-formed conscience** can help guide a person to make the right moral and ethical choices in life. Individuals have a duty to examine their conscience and consult with others to keep their conscience in check. Making good choices keeps a Christian's individual virtue and integrity intact.

The development of a **well-formed conscience** is ultimately the obligation of all Christians.

Steps to making moral decisions:

Pray – Pray for guidance, humility, wisdom and mercy

Gather all the Facts – Define the problem and effects it is having on persons and/or situations in your life

Consult with Informed People – Take counsel with several people of various stages/experiences in life (i.e. doctor, priest, deacon, etc.)

Discuss – Examine the alternatives. Prayerfully study, respect, and heed the guidance of the Church

Choose – Judge which alternative is morally right, then choose to do it

Be Open to Periodic Review – Resolve to continue to pray about the decision

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CATHOLIC RESOURCES

TV & Radio

etwn.com (EWTN Global Catholic Television and Radio Network)

CatholicTV.com

stgabrielradio.com (AM 820)

Online Resources

stbrendans.net (St. Brendan parish website)

Formed.org (Parish Code: 6FGQHZ)

catholic.com (Catholic Answers)

catholicscomehome.org

usccb.org (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

w2.vatican.va (official Vatican website)

colsdio.org (Diocese of Columbus website)

Apps (free)

myParsih (select St. Brendan)

Confession: A Roman Catholic App

Laudate (many Catholic resources in one app)

Catholic News

The Catholic Times Newspaper (can get subscription or view old issues on colsdio.org)

nregister.com (National Catholic Register)

thecatholicworldreport.com

catholicnews.com

Books Suggestions

Catechism of the Catholic Church

"Rediscovering Catholicism", "Rediscover Jesus", "Dynamic Catholic" - Matthew Kelly@ dynamiccatholic.com

"Rome Sweet Home", "Lamb's Supper", "The Creed" - Scott Hahn@stpaulcenter.com

"What Catholics Really Believe" - Karl Keating

"Why be Catholic?", "Does the Bible Really Say That?" - Patrik Madrid

"I'm Not Being Fed" - Jeff Cavins

Look for writings by the current or past Popes and writings by the saints including:

St. Ignatius, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, St. Francis de Sales, St. Teresa of Avila,

St. Thomas More Newman, St. Therese of Lisieux (The Little Flower) and Mother Teresa

Cds - DVDs - Video

Lighthouse Catholic Media (CDs / books available in the church / school lobby for a small donation)

"The Mass Explained" dvd by Fr. Larry Richards or any dvd/video by Bishop Robert Barron

DVD/Video Series: "Symbolon: Knowing the Faith" and "Catholicism" (both series are on formed.org)

Google/YouTube video, search for: Fr. Mike Schmitz (does 6-10 minute videos on many Catholic topics),

Richard Rohr (Franciscan priest), Fr. John Ricardo, Matthew Kelly, Mother Angelica (founder of EWTN)

Stores

Generations Religious Gifts, 1095 Dublin Rd, Columbus, OH

The Catholic Company: www.catholiccompany.com (online store)

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APOSTLES CREED:

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth;
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell:
on the third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven, and sits at the
right hand of God, the Father Almighty;
from thence He shall come to judge
the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.*

What is a Creed?

- The Creed was a public statement of faith
- The Creed anchored Christian faith to a tradition, to make it difficult for people to be led astray by strange doctrines
- The Creed was a preaching and teaching tool
- The Creed was memorized through frequent repetition, which helped the believers who could not read
- The Creed provided a doctrinal basis for different churches to accept one another, and to reject those who did not accept the basic truths

The Nicene Creed, presents the basic Catholic teachings about the nature of God. Catholics, Orthodox, and many Protestants accept the ancient Nicene Creed. The current form of the creed was written at the Councils of Nicaea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381). Over 300 Bishops from all over the world gathered to write the Creed, in response to Arianism, a form of Christianity that denied Jesus was fully God. The Nicene Creed ultimately explains the Church's teachings about the Trinity, but it also affirms historical realities of Jesus' life. Even though the creed does not directly quote Scripture, it is based on biblical concepts.

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The Creed Explained

I Believe In One God Christians, like Jews and Muslims, believe that only one God exists. The former English translation of the creed began with “WE” believe, while the Greek, Latin and Current English translation begin with “I” believe. The latter is more accurate, because reciting the creed is ultimately an individual confession of belief, although the creed also expresses the collective beliefs of the Church.

The Father Almighty Jesus frequently calls God “Father” in the Scriptures. God the Father is the first person within the Godhead. The Father is the “origin” or “source” of the Trinity.

Maker of Heaven and Earth of All Things Visible and Invisible Catholics believe that God created the visible world (created matter) and the invisible one (spiritual work of angels, etc.) Thus, God created everything. Some early sects, the Gnostics and Marcionites, believed that God the Father created the spirit world, but that an “evil” god (called demiurge) created the similarly evil material world. The Creed dispels such a notion.

I Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ Jesus Christ is the Lord of all. The title Lord means that Jesus is master of all.

The Only Begotten Son of God Jesus is in a unique relationship with God the Father. While Hebrew kings were sons of God symbolically, Just is the only Son of God by nature.

Born of the Father Before All Ages Begotten has the meaning of born, fathered, generated, or produced. God the Son is born out of the essence of God the Father, just as a child shares the same humanness as his or her parents, the Sone shares his essential nature of God with the Father.

God from God, Light from Light God the Son exists in relation to God the Father. The Son is not the Father, but they both are God.

True God from True God God the Son is not a half-god or inferior to God the Father. God the Son is full and utterly God, distinct from the Father, yet not divided from the Father.

Begotten, Not Made Some Christians today (Jehovah’s Witnesses) and in the past (Arians) have suggested that Jesus was a creation of God. The creed tells us that just as when a woman gives birth she does not create a child out of nothing, being begotten of God, the Son is not created out of nothing. Since the Son’s birth from the Father occurred before time was created, begotten refers to a permanent relationship as opposed to an event within time.

Consubstantial with the Father God the Father and God the Son are equally divine, united in substance and will. Father and Son share the same substance or essence of divinity. That is, the Father and Son both share the qualities and essential nature that make one in reality God. However, sharing the same substance does not mean they share identity of person.

Through Him All Things Were Made The Bible tells us that through the Son, as Word of God, all things have been created.

For Us Men and for Our Salvation, He Came Down From Heaven Jesus came from Heaven. While the creed says “down” it is important to remember that our language is limited by time and spatiality. Heaven is not “up”, just as God is not biologically male father. However, due to our limits of language, we are forced to describe heaven symbolically and spatially.

And by the Holy Spirit, Was Incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and Became Man God the Son became incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He was born of a virgin through the Holy Spirit. God truly became human in Jesus Christ. Catholics believe that Jesus of Nazareth was and is a real human being, not simply a spirit or ghost.

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The Creed Explained (continued)

For Our Sake He Was Crucified Under Pontius Pilate; He Suffered Death, and Was Buried Jesus died on a cross, suffered as humans do, truly died and was laid in a tomb.

And Rose Again on the Third Day in Accordance with the Scriptures Jesus was resurrected bodily as the Scriptures say, just as Jesus truly died, he truly rose from the dead three days later. The bodily resurrection is the keystone of Christian doctrine and experience. However, Jesus was not just physically resuscitated (as was Lazarus), but rather his body was transformed at the resurrection. The word “again” is used because Jesus first “rising” was his birth. To “rise again” is to be alive again.

He Ascended into Heaven and Is Seated at the Right Hand of the Father In ancient science, heaven was thought to be “up” and literally situated above the sky. So in the Scriptures, Jesus is said to “ascend” to heaven. Whatever happened that day, Luke had to render the event into his own scientific paradigm, so he said Jesus “went up” to heaven. Again, we are limited by our language and experience of spatiality. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, i.e., sharing authority with the Father, and not literally sitting next to the Father.

He Will Come Again in Glory to Judge the Living and the Dead and His Kingdom Will Have No End Jesus is coming again to righteously judge the living and dead. His kingdom cannot be destroyed, despite all of humanity’s efforts. The creed says Jesus is coming; it does not say when or how.

I Believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life The Holy Spirit is also called “Lord”. The Holy Spirit sustains our lives as Christians, illuminating us after the new birth. The original Creed of Nicaea simply ended with “we Believe in the Holy Spirit”.

Who Proceeds from the Father and the Son The Son is said to be begotten, while the Spirit is said to proceed. Both words convey that the Son and Spirit are in special relationships to the Father, yet also fully divine. The Catholic Church acknowledges that the Father is the sole source within the Trinity, and admits that “proceeds from the Father and Son” means “proceeds from the Father through the Son.”

Who with the Father and Son Is Adored and Glorified Since the Holy Spirit is fully God, like the Father and Son, He is worthy of the same worship and adoration.

Who Has Spoken Through the Prophets The Spirit inspired the prophets of old, and inspires the Church today

I Believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church The creeds requires belief in the Catholic (Universal) Church, whose origins are ancient and historical, going back to the Apostles themselves. Thus, the Church was built upon the faith and witness of the apostles.

I Confess One Baptism for the Forgiveness of Sins Catholics believe that sacramentally, through the waters of baptism, God forgives us of our sins, and we are born again. This belief of baptism’s saving power is ancient and universally acknowledged in the early Christian writings.

And I Look Forward to the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to Come, Amen Christians always hope for the end of this fractured system, when the universe is fully reconciled with God in Christ Jesus. The Nicene Creed seems to affirm both the existence of a soul-filled heaven and the later resurrection of the dead when souls meet glorified body.

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Church Tradition

CATHOLIC TEACHING

Why Should I Go to Mass Every Day?

- "The Mass is the most perfect form of prayer!" (Pope Paul VI)
- For each Mass we attend with devotion, Our Lord sends a saint to comfort us at death.
(Revelation of Christ to St. Gertrude the Great)
- St. Padre Pio said, "The world could exist more easily without the sun than without the Mass."
- The Curé d'Ars, St. Jean Vianney, said, "If we knew the value of the Mass, we would die of joy."
- St. Teresa asked Our Lord, "How can I thank you?" Our Lord replied, "Attend one Mass."

The Ten Commandments

- 1 I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.
- 2 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
- 3 Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.
- 4 Honor thy father and thy mother.
- 5 Thou shalt not kill.
- 6 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- 7 Thou shalt not steal.
- 8 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- 9 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
- 10 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-39)

You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart,
with your whole soul and with all your mind.
You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The Commandments of the Church

1. To assist at Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation.
2. To confess your sins at least once a year.
3. To receive Holy Communion during the Easter season.
4. To keep holy the holy days of obligation.
5. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.
6. To contribute to the support of the Church.

Sacraments

A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. The seven sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, Matrimony

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10)

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.
3. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.
8. Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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Reasons to Choose Catholicism & Words Defined

10 REASONS TO BE CATHOLIC

by Matthew Kelly

10. This is the Church that Jesus Christ started and sent the Holy Spirit to guide. It is unique and original.
9. The Catholic Church has relieved more suffering than any other group of people in the history of the world. We Care for the sick, the hungry, the lonely, the homeless, the uneducated, and the imprisoned.
8. We have history and mystery. To really understand Christianity you need a historical perspective, and the History of Christianity is Catholic. For more than 1,500 years there were no Baptist, Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Pentecostal Christians, Lutherans, Mormons, Evangelical Christians, and Non-Denominational Christians. Today, there are more than 25,000 different Christian denominations but they all lack the rich and beautiful history we have a Catholics. We have history, and we have mystery. It's all right not to have the answer to everything. Some things are a mystery and that's OK.
7. We have the Saints. These are the great heroes and heroines of Christianity. They are the most diverse group of people in history. Some were rich and some were poor; some were very well educated and some had no formal education; some were young and others were old. They have lived in every century, on every continent, in every country – and they all tried to be the best-version-of-themselves. Now they are in Heave, cheering you on.
6. We believe in the power of prayer. At every moment of every day Mass is being prayed in 1000's of places around the world. That's our family praying for the whole world. We don't just pray for Catholics; we pray for everyone. Imagine how different the history of the world would have been if the Catholic Church had never offered a single prayer.
5. It's the same all around the world. Even though you may not speak the language, you still know what is going on. Catholicism is the same everywhere, and that's a beautiful thing.
4. The Catholic Church is the premier defender of human rights.
3. You need to be part of something bigger than yourself. Life is not about you. It's about laying down your life in service of others out of love for God. You could lay down your life for a sport, a career, money, things...and people do. But what a waste! The Catholic Church has the most important mission in the world – and you are invited to get involved and be a part of that great mission!
2. The Eucharist. Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist.
1. You don't have to say no to God when he invites you. There are some invitations we don't turn down.

Familiar Words

Bible
Scripture
Creed
Revelation
Old Testament
Paschal Mystery
Tradition
Faith
Catholic
New Testament
7 Books not in Protestant Bible
Incarnation
Immaculate Conception
Divine Providence
Pentecost

Understanding/Definition

A word meaning a collection of books
Inspired written word of God
Contains the basic truths of our faith
God self-communication through Scripture & Tradition
Begins with the story of creation and ends with the Prophet Malachi
The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus
The way in which something is done over and over
Free, affirmative response to God experienced within a community
Word means Universal
Stories of Jesus' life...and life of the Church after his death
Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees
The Christmas Story... Jesus becomes man
Mary is conceived without Original Sin
God will always love us and care for our needs
Birthday of the Church

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Catholic Social Teaching

Dignity of the Human Person

Belief in the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching. Human life is sacred, and the dignity of the human person is the starting point for moral vision in society. This principle is grounded in the idea that the person is made in the “image of God”. The person is the clearest reflection of God among us.

Common Good & Community

The human person is both sacred and social. Human beings grow and achieve fulfillment in community. Human dignity can only be realized and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society. How we organize our society, in economics and politics, in law and policy, directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The obligation to “love thy neighbor” has an individual dimension, but also requires a broader social commitment. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the society, to the common good.

Option for the Poor

The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience. The “option for the poor” is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another. It states that the deprivation of the poor wounds the whole community. A healthy community can be achieved when members give special attention to those with special needs and on the margins of society.

Rights & Responsibilities

Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a right to life and a right to those things required for human decency – ie: food, shelter and clothing, employment, health care, & education. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities – to one another, to our families and to the larger society.

Role of Government & Subsidiarity

The state has a positive moral function, to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build common good. All people have a responsibility to participate in political institutions to achieve proper goals. Functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible, as long as they can be performed adequately. When needs cannot adequately be met at the lower level, then it is not only necessary, but imperative that higher levels of government intervene.

Economic Justice

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Workers have a right to productive work, fair wages, and safe working conditions. They also have the right to organize and join unions. People have a right to economic initiative and private property, but these rights have limits. No one should amass excessive wealth when others lack basic necessities. Catholic teachings opposes collectivist and statist economic approaches. It also rejects the notion that a free market automatically produces justice. Competitive free markets are useful elements of economic systems but markets must be kept within limits, because there are so many needs and goods that cannot be satisfied by the market system. The state and of all society should intervene to ensure these basic needs are met.

Stewardship of God's Creation

The goods of the earth are gifts from God and are intended by God for the benefit of everyone. There is a “social mortgage” that guides our use of the world's goods, and we have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a sign of our respect for God.

Promotion of Peace & Disarmament

Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of Pope John Paul II, “Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves a mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations, of collaboration and binding agreements.” There is a close relationship in Catholic teachings between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order.

Participation

All people have a right to participate in economic, political and cultural life of society. It is a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. It is wrong for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly or to be unable to participate in society.

Global Solidarity and Development

We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice. Authentic development must be full human development. It must respect and promote personal, social, economic, and political rights, including the rights of nations and of peoples. It must avoid the extremists of underdevelopment on one hand, and “superdevelopment” on the other. Accumulating material goods, and technical resources will be unsatisfactory and debasing if there is no respect or moral, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of the person.

HOW TO RECITE THE HOLY ROSARY

1. SAY THESE PRAYERS...

IN THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (*As you say this, with your right hand touch your forehead when you say Father, touch your breastbone when you say Son, touch your left shoulder when you say Holy, and touch your right shoulder when you say Spirit.*)

I BELIEVE IN GOD, the Father almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty. He shall come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

OUR FATHER, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art 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.

GLORY BE to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

O MY JESUS, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy. Amen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN, mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us. And after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

O GOD, WHOSE only-begotten Son by His life, death and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech Thee, that by meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANNOUNCE each mystery by saying something like, "The third Joyful Mystery is the Birth of Our Lord." This is required only when saying the Rosary in a group.

2. IN THIS ORDER...

INTRODUCTION

1. IN THE NAME □
2. I BELIEVE IN GOD □
3. OUR FATHER □
4. HAIL MARY □
5. HAIL MARY □
6. HAIL MARY □
7. GLORY BE □
8. O MY JESUS □

THE FIRST DECADE

9. ANNOUNCE □
10. OUR FATHER □
11. HAIL MARY □
12. HAIL MARY □
13. HAIL MARY □
14. HAIL MARY □
15. HAIL MARY □
16. HAIL MARY □
17. HAIL MARY □
18. HAIL MARY □
19. HAIL MARY □
20. HAIL MARY □
21. GLORY BE □
22. O MY JESUS □

THE SECOND DECADE

23. ANNOUNCE □
24. OUR FATHER □
25. HAIL MARY □
26. HAIL MARY □
27. HAIL MARY □
28. HAIL MARY □
29. HAIL MARY □
30. HAIL MARY □
31. HAIL MARY □
32. HAIL MARY □
33. HAIL MARY □
34. HAIL MARY □
35. GLORY BE □
36. O MY JESUS □

THE THIRD DECADE

37. ANNOUNCE □
38. OUR FATHER □
39. HAIL MARY □
40. HAIL MARY □
41. HAIL MARY □
42. HAIL MARY □
43. HAIL MARY □
44. HAIL MARY □
45. HAIL MARY □
46. HAIL MARY □
47. HAIL MARY □
48. HAIL MARY □
49. GLORY BE □
50. O MY JESUS □

THE FOURTH DECADE

51. ANNOUNCE □
52. OUR FATHER □
53. HAIL MARY □
54. HAIL MARY □
55. HAIL MARY □
56. HAIL MARY □
57. HAIL MARY □
58. HAIL MARY □
59. HAIL MARY □
60. HAIL MARY □
61. HAIL MARY □
62. HAIL MARY □
63. GLORY BE □
64. O MY JESUS □

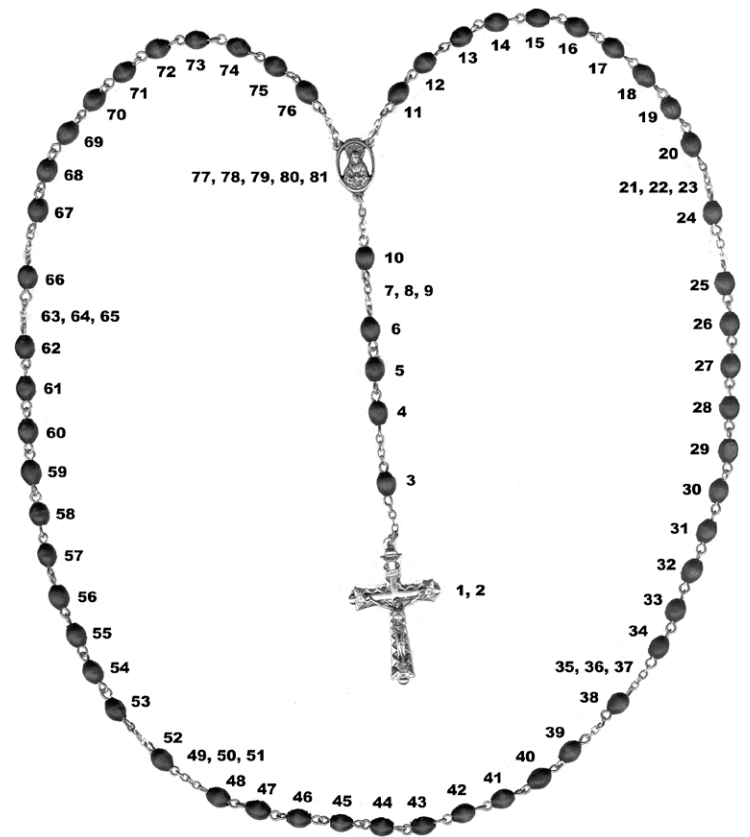
THE FIFTH DECADE

65. ANNOUNCE □
66. OUR FATHER □
67. HAIL MARY □
68. HAIL MARY □
69. HAIL MARY □
70. HAIL MARY □
71. HAIL MARY □
72. HAIL MARY □
73. HAIL MARY □
74. HAIL MARY □
75. HAIL MARY □
76. HAIL MARY □
77. GLORY BE □
78. O MY JESUS □

CONCLUSION

79. HAIL HOLY QUEEN □
80. O GOD, WHOSE □
81. IN THE NAME □

3. WHILE TOUCHING THESE BEADS TO KEEP TRACK OF YOUR PROGRESS...



4. AND SILENTLY MEDITATING ON THESE "MYSTERIES", OR EVENTS FROM THE LIVES OF JESUS AND MARY...

On Monday and Saturday, meditate on the Joyful Mysteries

- First Decade (Steps 9-22):** The Annunciation of Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)
Second Decade (Steps 23-36): The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56)
Third Decade (Steps 37-50): The Birth of Our Lord (Luke 2:1-21)
Fourth Decade (Steps 51-64): The Presentation of Our Lord (Luke 2:22-38)
Fifth Decade (Steps 65-78): The Finding of Our Lord in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

On Thursday, meditate on the Luminous Mysteries

- First Decade:** The Baptism of Our Lord in the River Jordan (Matthew 3:13-16)
Second Decade: The Wedding at Cana, when Christ manifested Himself (Jn 2:1-11)
Third Decade: The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15)
Fourth Decade: The Transfiguration of Our Lord (Matthew 17:1-8)
Fifth Decade: The Last Supper, when Our Lord gave us the Holy Eucharist (Mt 26)

On Tuesday and Friday, meditate on the Sorrowful Mysteries

- First Decade:** The Agony of Our Lord in the Garden (Matthew 26:36-56)
Second Decade: Our Lord is Scourged at the Pillar (Matthew 27:26)
Third Decade: Our Lord is Crowned with Thorns (Matthew 27:27-31)
Fourth Decade: Our Lord Carries the Cross to Calvary (Matthew 27:32)
Fifth Decade: The Crucifixion of Our Lord (Matthew 27:33-56)

On Wednesday and Sunday, meditate on the Glorious Mysteries

- First Decade:** The Glorious Resurrection of Our Lord (John 20:1-29)
Second Decade: The Ascension of Our Lord (Luke 24:36-53)
Third Decade: The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-41)
Fourth Decade: The Assumption of Mary into Heaven
Fifth Decade: The Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth

You are encouraged to copy and distribute this sheet.

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