
Everything a Confirmed Catholic Should Know

STUDY GUIDE

By Monsignor William P. Saunders

Students should be able to write or recite the following prayers:

Our Father	Glory Be	Act of Contrition
Hail Mary	Apostles' Creed	Hail, Holy Queen

Students should be able to thoroughly define the following terms:

Holy Trinity	Grace
Sacrament	Transubstantiation

Students should be able to list the following:

Ten Commandments	Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit
Seven Sacraments	Seven Precepts of the Church
Corporal Works of Mercy	Spiritual Works of Mercy
Three Theological Virtues	Four Major Parts of the Mass
Four Cardinal Virtues	Mysteries of the Rosary
Basic Outline of the Bible	The Four Gospels
The Beatitudes	Four Marks of the Church
Character Sacraments	Three Sacraments of Initiation

Students should know and understand the following terms:

God	Revelation	Faith
Old Testament	New Testament	Body & Soul
Adam & Eve	Original Sin	Concupiscence
Jesus	Incarnation	Immaculate Conception
Assumption	Mother of God	St. Joseph
Holy Thursday	Good Friday	Pontius Pilate
Crucifixion	Salvation	Redemption
Easter	Catholic Church	Pentecost
St. Peter	Apostolic Succession	Magisterium
Infallibility	St. Paul	Communion of Saints
Heaven & Beatific Vision	Hell	Purgatory
Resurrection of the Body	Angel	Canonization
Martyr	Mortal Sin	Venial Sin
Baptism by Desire & Blood	Hierarchy	Pope Francis
Bishop & Diocese	Priest & Parish	Pastor & Parochial Vicar
Mass as Sacrifice	Mass as Meal	Real Presence
Tabernacle	Last Supper	Words of Consecration
Sign	Matter	Form
Sanctifying Grace	Actual Grace	Sacramental Grace

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The Creed, p.1

“I believe in God”

“I believe in God” means that a person believes in God. **Belief** is the deepest conviction of mind. Belief in God is simply called faith.

God is self-existing, meaning He was not created. He is eternal: God always was, always is and always will be. He is infinite, meaning He has no limitations, like a need for food and water. God is a spirit. He is perfect. He is all-good, all-present, all-loving, all-merciful, all-just, all-holy, all-knowing (omniscient), and almighty (omnipotent).

We can know God through reason. Using **reason**, a person realizes that the world we see could have only been made by a Supreme Being. When we see the design, order, and beauty of creation and when we think of the precious gift of life, we are moved to believe in God: eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing Supreme Being who created everything.

We can also know God from supernatural revelation. **Revelation** means that God makes Himself known to us: He communicates with us. We find revelation in the truths in Sacred Scripture (the Bible) and in Tradition (the understanding and teaching of the faith since the time of the apostles). We respond to revelation in faith.

The **Bible** is the written Word of God, committed to His Church for the instruction and sanctification of mankind. When we say that the entire Bible is inspired, we mean that its principal author is God. For this reason, we say the Bible is the Word of God. Inspiration means the Holy Spirit enlightened and guided the human authors to write all those and only those things that He wanted to be written for the sake of our salvation. The Bible, therefore, is God’s truth.

The Bible has two parts: **the Old Testament** (46 books) and **the New Testament** (27 books). The Old Testament begins with creation and tells the story of the Jewish people almost to the time of Christ. The New Testament begins with the gospels (the story of Christ’s life), tells the history of the early Church, and concludes with the book of Revelation.

The basic structure of the Bible is as follows:

Old Testament (46 Books)

1. Pentateuch or Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy)
2. Historical Books
3. Wisdom Books
4. Books of the Prophets

New Testament (27 Books)

1. Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)
 2. Acts of the Apostles
 3. Epistles
 4. Revelation
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We believe in one God who has been revealed as three divine persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The **Holy Trinity** is one God, three divine persons: God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit. They are one because they share the same divine nature. They are equal but distinct. They exist from all eternity, and so are eternal. This is a mystery which we do not fully understand and which we could not know on our own; only through revelation do we know this and believe it through faith.

“the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth”

God created everything, and is the Supreme Being above all creatures. God did not create the world from materials, but created it from nothing. God created even that from which created is made. Traditionally speaking, God created ex nihilo, that is He created from nothing. He created the world and everything in it with purpose, according to His design, and of His own freewill. God did not have to create, but because of His perfect love, He created.

Creation climaxed when God created man and woman in His own image and likeness. No other creature is made in God's image and likeness; therefore, each person has a special relationship with God and a special dignity. This **“image and likeness”** also means that each human being has a body, a physical being of a person, and a **soul**, a spiritual being. While a person's parents in union with God create the physical body, God Himself creates the soul at the time of conception. The soul is immortal; when we die, even though our body dies, our soul lives on and stands in judgment before God.

According to the Bible, **Adam and Eve** were the first man and woman created by God. They had a special graced relationship with God. Because of their sin of disobeying God's command and wanting to be God, they lost this graced relationship. We call this first sin the **Original Sin**. Original Sin has been passed onto to every generation; each person is born with this Original Sin. Unlike other sins which we commit, Original Sin is a weakness in our human nature whereby like Adam and Eve we reject God's will and want to be God. Jesus came to restore the graced relationship, freeing us from sin and death through His sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection. We now benefit from what Christ did through **Baptism**, a sacrament which washes away all sin, both Original Sin and any other sins, and infuses the life of God in our souls. Nevertheless, even after Baptism, we still have **concupiscence**, that weakness in our human nature which still makes us susceptible to temptation; only with God's grace can we overcome weakness and temptation.

“and Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary”

Jesus is the second person of the Blessed Trinity. Jesus is the **Savior** of all mankind. Jesus means “savior.” Christ or Messiah means “anointed.” In God's plan, the Heavenly Father sent Jesus, His only begotten Son, into this world to free us from sin and to open the gates of Heaven. Here then is the mystery of the **Incarnation**: By the will of the Father, Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ, true God from all eternity, entered this world becoming also true man. Jesus is a divine person with two natures: a human nature and a divine nature. Jesus retained His divine nature and also took on a human nature. He is one like us in all things but sin: Jesus was born without sin and never sinned. In this way, Jesus is true God and true man.

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Mary is a model of faith for each of us. At the Annunciation, the Archangel Gabriel recognized her as “full of grace.” We believe that she was conceived and born free of Original Sin; we call this belief the Immaculate Conception. Since Mary shared in her Son's life and was sinless, at the end of her life she was taken body and soul into Heaven with our Lord; we call this the Assumption. We also call Mary the Mother of God, or Theotokos in Greek, meaning that Mary is the mother of the person, Jesus, the second person of the Blessed Trinity and true God.

St. Joseph is the foster father of Jesus Christ, not the natural father. He was a very holy man. Remember that God, the Father, entrusted St. Joseph with the care of His only Son. As a good Jewish father, St. Joseph taught Jesus the trade of carpentry and how to read and write. St. Joseph also provided a home for Mary and Jesus.

“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, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead”

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of the province of Judea under Tiberius Caesar. He ordered the execution of Jesus after He was brought to trial by the Jews. Crucifixion is a very painful type of execution whereby a person is first tortured with scourging and then nailed on a cross to die a slow death of suffocation. Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday.

Why did Jesus have to die on the cross? Although Jesus died an awful death, we believe that He offered the perfect sacrifice for our sins. The Jewish people believed that sin violated God's law, offended Him, and separated a person from His love. For the sin to be forgiven, the person had to offer a sacrifice: by offering a sacrifice, like a lamb, sin was washed away and the person was reunited with God. However, because sin had grown so much, no longer could any sacrifice offered by a person forgive the sin. Instead, only the divine action of God Himself could offer such a sacrifice; but since sin is committed by a human, it would also take the action of man. Therefore, Jesus, who is true God and true man, is the only one who could offer the perfect sacrifice for all sin for all time-- past, present, and future-- and bring mankind back into union with God. However, Jesus did not just die in sacrifice, He rose from the dead giving all who believe the promise of everlasting life.

There are two important terms to remember:

Redemption: Jesus redeemed us from sin. He offered His suffering and death to the Father out of total obedience and love to the Father for all mankind so that our sins would be forgiven and we would have eternal life with God in heaven. We were slaves to sin, and Jesus paid the price to buy our freedom. Just as a person has to pay a price to a pawn broker to “redeem” a piece of merchandise, so Jesus paid a price for us to be redeemed from the slavery of sin.

Salvation: Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have salvation. Salvation is being one with God; it is sharing His life and being in union with Him forever in Heaven when we die.

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When we say Christ descended into hell, we do not mean "hell" as we know it: a place of eternal punishment for the devil, the fallen angels, and those who have no love for God. Rather, before our Lord's passion, death, and resurrection, all of those who died went to hell, as in the land of the dead. The Jewish name for this was "**Sheol**." Here there was a place of punishment for the wicked, and a separate place of waiting for those who loved God and awaited the Messiah and Savior--people like Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah waited here. Therefore, when we say, "Jesus descended into Hell," we mean that He descended into a place of rest where the souls of the just were waiting for Him. Jesus showed them that the sacrifice for sin had been made and the gates of Heaven were now open; He then took the faithful souls who were waiting to go to Heaven.

The **Resurrection** occurred on **Easter Sunday**. Because of Jesus' love and obedience to the Father, the Father raised Jesus from the dead so that they would be united perfectly in Heaven. Jesus was raised body and soul; His whole person was raised. However, He was not a resuscitated corpse, but had risen to a glorified and perfected life.

Forty days after Easter, Jesus ascended to Heaven, returning to His Father. The **Ascension** of our Lord into Heaven fulfills the promise that He has prepared a dwelling place there for each person who believes and dies in the faith.

When we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, we mean that our Lord as God is equal to the Father. He shares above all the saints in the glory of His Father and exercises for all eternity the supreme authority over all creatures. The Jewish people always considered the right hand a special place of honor and a place of equality.

When we say that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead, we mean that on the last day at the end of time, our Lord will come to pronounce a sentence of eternal reward or eternal punishment on everyone who has ever lived in this world.

"we believe in the Holy Spirit"

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church as the source of life and sanctifies souls through grace. (Sanctify means to make holy.)

Fifty days after Easter, at **Pentecost**, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles gave them special gifts. The **gifts of the Holy Spirit** are fear of the Lord, piety, knowledge, understanding, counsel, wisdom, and fortitude.

The Holy Spirit also strengthens us with virtues. A **virtue** is a strength and a good habit which helps us to avoid evil and do good. The three **theological virtues** are faith, hope, and charity.

- Faith** - the belief in God
 - Hope** - the trust in God
 - Charity** - the love of God and neighbor
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By faith, we firmly believe all the truths God has revealed, as found in the Bible and Sacred Tradition. Through faith, we have hope: a firm trust in God who is all-powerful and faithful to His promises, and who in His mercy gives us eternal happiness and the means to obtain it. By charity, we love God above all things and our neighbors as ourselves. These gifts and virtues help us by making us more alert to do the will of God.

We also practice the Four **Cardinal Virtues**:

PRUDENCE helps us to do good and avoid evil by making correct decisions in life.

FORTITUDE gives us strength and determination in living our faith by loving God and one's neighbor. It gives us courage to defend our faith and face persecution.

JUSTICE inspires us to respect the rights and dignity of all human beings.

TEMPERANCE helps us to enjoy pleasures with moderation and to use things wisely. It helps us to become mature, disciplined Christians.

These are called “cardinal virtues” because every other virtue, such as patience or humility, depends upon them. The word cardinal means “hinge” in Latin, so these four virtues are the ones upon which the others “hinge.”

“the holy, catholic church”

We call the Church “**the mystical Body of Christ.**” We are united to Christ into one body through our Baptism. The **Church** is a community of believers. Through our Baptism, we believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. Through Baptism, we are His adopted sons and daughters. Christ is the head of the Church; those baptized living people and those who are in Heaven and Purgatory are members of the mystical body.

The Church is called “the Catholic Church” because in the year 100, St. Ignatius of Antioch used the word **catholic**, which means “universal,” to describe this one Church of all Christians. Ever since that time, our Church has been called “the Catholic Church.” Officially, it is also called “**the Roman Catholic Church**” because St. Peter was the first Bishop of Rome, the capital of the Roman Empire, and to this day, the Pope is the Bishop of Rome.

Jesus is the founder of the Catholic Church and its head. Jesus wanted His mission to continue, so He entrusted His authority to the apostles at the Ascension to go out, preach the gospel, make disciples of all people, and baptize. **St. Paul** is the great apostle who evangelized the Gentiles. The **Pope** is the leader of the Church on earth and is Christ's Vicar or representative. **St. Peter** was the first Pope. Jesus said, “Peter, you are rock and upon this rock I will build my Church.” Ever since the time of St. Peter, the Church guided by the Holy Spirit has chosen a successor to be Pope. Therefore, Pope Francis is the successor of St. Peter. By the action of the Holy Spirit, the Pope is preserved from error when he declares a dogmatic teaching on faith or morals; this is called **Papal Infallibility**.

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The Bishops are the successors of the apostles, who were the first bishops. The authority given to the apostles by Jesus has been handed down from bishop to bishop through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. This handing down of authority is called **apostolic succession**. Keep in mind that the Pope is also the Bishop of Rome.

What is the difference between the Catholic Church and other Christian religions?

1. We believe that the Catholic Church was founded directly by Jesus, who appointed St. Peter as the first Pope. The authority of St. Peter has been handed down and rests with our present Pope. The Orthodox Church did not officially exist until the year 1054 when they broke away from the Catholic Church; however, the Orthodox Churches do have apostolic succession. The Protestant churches, which are more accurately called ecclesial communities, did not exist until 1517 at the earliest when Martin Luther started the Protestant Reformation.
2. We believe that the fullness of God's revelation and the understanding of that revelation rests within the Catholic Church.
3. We believe that the sacraments give great graces which unite us in life and love with God now and prepare us for our perfect union in heaven.
4. We also worship at Mass. The Mass unites us with the everlasting, ever-present reality of the Lord's passion, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Consequently, **we believe that the fullest means of salvation subsists in or rests within the Catholic Church**. This does not mean that others cannot be saved; salvation is granted to anyone who truly believes in God and tries to follow the will of God, or to those who through no fault of their own do not know God but try to lead good lives as they know best. Nevertheless, the fullest means of salvation which comes to us through the Mass, the sacraments, and the teachings of Church are available only in the Catholic Church.

The Four Marks of the Church are one, holy, catholic, and apostolic:

1. The Church is **ONE** because all of its members profess the same faith, have the same sacraments, and are united under the leadership of the Pope.
 2. The Church is **HOLY** because it was founded by Jesus Christ and because it teaches according to the will of Christ holy doctrines and provides the means of leading a holy life for its members. The members of the church also continue the mission of Jesus, pray, and worship, thereby bringing about holiness.
 3. The Church is **CATHOLIC** which means universal. The Church is Catholic or universal because it is destined to last for all time and strives to fulfill the command of Jesus to teach all truths revealed by God. Also, the Church is universal because it includes all of the faithful on earth, in Heaven, and in Purgatory.
 4. The Church is **APOSTOLIC** because it was founded by Christ who entrusted His authority to the apostles. This authority has been handed on from bishop to bishop; this handing on is called "apostolic succession."
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“the communion of saints”

The **Communion of Saints** refers to the union of the faithful on earth (**Church Militant**), the souls in Purgatory (**Church Suffering**), and the blessed in Heaven (**Church Triumphant**) with Jesus Christ as their head. We are all called to be saints, and to live a life like Jesus. Those individuals who have led very good and holy lives are often formally declared saints by the Church and are models for us to follow. The declaring of a person as a saint by the Church is called **canonization**. Keep in mind that everyone in Heaven is a saint; however, the Church only gives that official title to those who have been canonized. Those saints who died in defense of the faith are called **martyrs**; St. Stephen was the first martyr of the Church.

Heaven is a place and state of eternal happiness in union with God. In Heaven, we will see God “face to face.” No longer will there be any confusion, doubt, or misunderstanding. This special seeing God face to face is called the **beatific vision**. Also present in Heaven are the **angels**, who are pure spirits and messengers of God. God gives each person a special guardian angel to protect them.

Hell is a place and state of eternal punishment of the fallen angels and those who die in the state of mortal sin, who have rejected the love of God, and who have no sorrow for sin. People really place themselves in Hell because they refuse to seek forgiveness for their sins and have turned away from God.

Purgatory is the place of temporary punishment where the souls of those who die in the state of grace must be cleansed of venial sin or the hurts caused by sin. In justice, God holds us accountable for our venial sins or the hurt caused by sin; in His love, he purges or cleanses our soul so that we can be united with Him in Heaven. To have the beatific vision, the soul has to be perfect-totally free of sin and the hurt caused by sin.

“the forgiveness of sin”

God has given the Church, through Jesus, the power to forgive sins, no matter how great, if the sinner is truly sorry and promises to amend his life. This forgiveness comes especially through the Sacrament of Penance when a person makes a good confession and receives sacramental absolution.

“the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting”

At the end of time, there will be the resurrection of the body, when we will be united body and soul in Heaven with Jesus. Just as Jesus rose and ascended body and soul into Heaven, so will we. Just as Jesus after the resurrection could appear and disappear suddenly, eat a meal and be touched, so will our own bodies undergo a glorious transformation.

For those souls who have already died and have been judged, they will be united to a changed body that is immortal and incorruptible. For those souls in Heaven, their bodies will be glorified, meaning totally spiritualized, without any defect, suffering, or death.

The souls in Purgatory will be finally purged and taken to Heaven where they too will have a glorified body. The souls in Hell will be united with their body, which will be immortal and incorruptible, but they will have pain and suffering. The faithful on earth who have not died will be glorified body and soul in Heaven.

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The Sacraments p.1

A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. We believe that there are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Anointing of the Sick.

A sacrament is a **sign**. Signs are things or actions which convey an idea. A smile or a frown is a sign of one's feelings. A flag is a sign of a nation. Words are signs which convey an idea. In the sacraments, the words together with the action and the materials used constitute the sacred sign. The words or prayer of the sacrament is called the **form**, while the action part using something material (like water or oil) is called the **matter**.

For example, in Baptism, the priest pours water three times over the head of the person (the matter) while saying the prayer, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (the form).

The sacraments are signs which not only communicate an idea but also produce what they signify. The sacraments not only make us aware of the divine life but also actually produce this life within us.

A sacrament is **instituted by Christ**. Jesus Himself gave us the sacraments, and they are instruments by which He is now present with us and through which he shares His divine life with us. Each of the sacraments can be traced back to what Jesus Himself actually did or said to do.

A sacrament gives **grace**. Grace is a supernatural gift from God for **sanctification** (to make holy) and **salvation** (to bring into union with God). God gives us grace freely; we do not deserve it.

- The sacraments give a special grace called **sanctifying grace**, which is simply the life of the Holy Trinity. Through the reception of the sacraments, we share in the life of the Holy Trinity.
- The sacraments also give actual graces. **Actual grace** is that grace which enlightens the mind and strengthens the will to do good and avoid evil.
- Each sacrament gives its own special **sacramental grace**; each sacrament is different and offers a unique sharing in the life of the Lord. For example, when a couple is married, they receive a special grace to live the sacrament as husband and wife.

If a sacrament is properly received, it will always give grace, provided the individual does not place an obstacle in the way, such as being in a state of mortal sin. The individual must have faith and believe in the sacrament, and be in a state of grace (free of mortal sin). In order to receive Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Marriage lawfully, the individual must be in the state of sanctifying grace, that is without mortal sin. One who receives any of these sacraments in a state of mortal sin commits a sacrilege, a very serious sin. If an individual is in the state of mortal sin, he should receive Reconciliation first.

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders are called **character sacraments** because these sacraments leave a permanent mark or character on the soul; for this reason, these sacraments are only received once.

The sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation are called **sacraments of initiation** because through these sacraments we become full members of the Church.

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BAPTISM

Baptism is the sacrament by which Original Sin and all sin is washed away, sanctifying grace is infused into the soul, and a person becomes a child of God, a member of the Church, and a sharer in the saving mystery of our Lord's passion, death, and resurrection.

Matter: Pouring of water or immersion in water

Form: *"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*

Basis in Scripture:

"During that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. Immediately on coming up out of the water, He saw the sky rent in two and the Spirit descending on Him like a dove. Then a voice came from the heavens: "You are my beloved Son. On you my favor rests." (Mark 1:9-11)

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He said, "full authority has been given to me both in heaven and on earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world!" (Matthew 28:18-20)

"Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Through baptism into His death, we were buried with Him, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. If we have been united with Him so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. If we have been united with Him through likeness to His death, so shall we be through a like resurrection." (Romans 6:3-11)

Effects of Baptism:

- Washes away Original Sin and all sin and infuses the divine life of God in our souls. Baptism is the sacrament of rebirth through which Jesus gives us the life of God in sanctifying grace. Original sin is our inherited condition from the sin of Adam and Eve by which we are born without grace and inclined to love ourselves more than God. Original Sin leaves us with a darkened intellect and weakened will-- we face temptation and do not always choose to do what is good and right. This weakness caused by Original Sin is called concupiscence. While baptism washes away Original Sin, concupiscence remains. We always need God's grace to overcome concupiscence. In the case of adults, baptism removes not only Original Sin, but also any other sin and the punishment due to sin.
 - Makes us members of the mystical body of Christ. Through Baptism, we become members of the Church. For instance, when someone is baptized in the Catholic Church, he is considered a Catholic. St. Paul wrote, "There is but one body and one Spirit, just as there is but one hope given all of you by your call. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, and works through all, and is in all." (Letter to the Ephesians 4:4-6)
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- Makes us the adopted sons and daughters of God. Through Baptism, we have a special relationship with God. St. John wrote, "See what love the Father has bestowed on us in letting us be called children of God! Yet that is what we are." (I John 3:1)
- Gives us a share in the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Through Baptism, we are plunged into the paschal mystery of Jesus. We now share in the benefits of the saving act of His passion, death, and resurrection. We are now called to live a life like Christ's.

The normal way of baptizing is with water, following the proper matter and form. However, we also believe in two special types of Baptism: desire and blood. An unbaptized person receives the baptism of desire when he loves God above all things and desires to do all that is necessary for his salvation, but has never really been taught the faith or been raised in the Church. Many people in the world have never had the opportunity to learn about Jesus or the Church; nevertheless, these people have lived good lives and searched for God in their hearts. Because of their desire, they too may gain entry to Heaven by God's grace.

An unbaptized person receives the baptism of blood when he suffers martyrdom for the faith of Christ. In the early Church during the Roman persecution, sometimes people who were studying to become baptized and become members of the Church were arrested and executed; their martyrdom was a testimony of their faith, so we believe they were baptized by "their blood."

Practical Point: Anyone can baptize in the case of emergency by pouring water over the head three times and saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

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CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is the sacrament through which Jesus confers on a person the fullness of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, thereby making us full members of the Catholic Church.

Matter: Anointing with Holy Chrism

Form: *"Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

Basis in Scripture:

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told the apostles that He would be with them always until the end of the world. Jesus said, "John baptized with water, but within a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, yes, even to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:5,8) At **Pentecost**, the Holy Spirit descended.

"When the day of Pentecost came it found them gathered in one place. Suddenly from up in the sky there came a noise like a strong, driving wind which was heard all through the house where they were seated. Tongues as of fire appeared which parted and came to rest on each one of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to express themselves in foreign tongues and make bold proclamation as the Spirit prompted them." (Acts 2:1-4)

"Paul then explained, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He used to tell the people about the one who would come after him in whom they were to believe -- that is, Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. As Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came down on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to utter prophecies. There were in the company about twelve men in all." (Acts 19:4-7)

Confirmation usually follows the reception of Baptism and Holy Eucharist, and is therefore the third of the sacraments of initiation. **Confirmation** is the sacrament through which Jesus fully confers on us the Holy Spirit, making us full-fledged and responsible members of the mystical body of Christ. We also receive the graces of the Holy Spirit especially those which enable us to profess, explain, and spread the faith.

Through the sacrament of Confirmation, Jesus gives us:

- An increase in divine life
 - A new and deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit
 - The sacramental mark or character of Confirmation
 - An increase of the strength to profess, defend, and spread the faith
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The Sacraments p.5

We receive the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

Fear of the Lord: We respect God as God, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, infinite and eternal. We love God above all things, and have such respect and awe that we do not want to sin or face the punishment due to sin. The gift of fear of the Lord motivates us to live in God's grace, and to avoid the evil of sin.

Piety: We are humble before God, realizing that all of our blessings come from Him. Therefore, piety inspires us to worship God and to love Him.

Knowledge: We receive and accept the faith. With faith, we see the goodness of God in all of creation. We also see everything in relation to God and His eternal plan.

Understanding: Having faith, understanding gives us deeper insight into the mysteries of faith it so that we can better live it. With understanding, a person can then help to explain the faith to others.

Counsel: With counsel, a person is better able to make good decisions, knowing the difference between right and wrong. Counsel enables a person to advise and guide others.

Wisdom: The gift of wisdom enables us "to think with the mind of Christ," to appreciate divine things, and to see the work of God in our lives. With wisdom, we see beyond life in this world, and look toward Heaven.

Fortitude: We have courage to live and to defend the faith. We are strong against temptation and persecution. Fortitude helps us to do what is good and right even if it means being unpopular, facing persecution, or even being a martyr.

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HOLY EUCHARIST

The Holy Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of our Lord, Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.

Matter: Unleavened Bread and Wine

Form: *"Takes this all of you and eat it. This is my Body which will be given up for you."*

And "Take this all of you and drink from it. This is the cup of my Blood, the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me." (Words of Consecration at the Mass)

Basis in Scripture:

During the meal, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples. "Take this and eat it," He said, "this is my body." Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them. "All of you must drink from it," He said, "for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out in behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:26-7)

"I received from the Lord what I handed on to you, namely, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which He was betrayed took bread, and after He had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper, He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me: Every time, then, you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes! This means that whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily sins against the body and blood of the Lord. A man shall examine himself first; only then should he eat the bread and drink of the cup. He who eats and drinks without recognizing the body eats and drinks a judgment on himself." (I Corinthians 11:23-29)

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament and the sacrifice in which Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine is contained, offered, and received. It is the constant, infallible teaching of the Church that in the Holy Eucharist, the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ are contained under the appearances of bread and wine. Jesus gave the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood to the Apostles at the **Last Supper on Holy Thursday**. This power is passed on to all priests through the sacrament of **Holy Orders**.

By the will of the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the priesthood of Christ entrusted to priests, at the words of the consecration in the Mass, the actual bread and wine are changed into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus. We call this change **transubstantiation**. Only in appearance (color, size, shape, taste, smell, etc.) does the bread and wine remain; however, the bread and wine themselves have been changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus. We call this process or change, transubstantiation; meaning change of substance; while the taste, smell, shape, color remain the same, the "what it is" or essence has changed. At Holy Communion, we do not receive bread or wine, but the Body and Blood of Christ.

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The Holy Eucharist is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus; therefore, the Holy Eucharist is the real presence of Jesus. Keep in mind that when a person receives Holy Communion, whether he receives only the Sacred Host, or the Sacred Host and the Precious Blood, or only the Precious Blood, he receives fully the whole presence of Christ and the fullness of grace in the sacrament.

We adore the Holy Eucharist because Jesus is truly present and Jesus is truly God. That is why we genuflect whenever we pass in front of the **tabernacle**. It is an act of adoration of God.

To receive Holy Communion, we should prepare ourselves properly. First, the Church decrees that we should fast from food and drink (other than water and medicine) one hour before Mass. We should also prepare ourselves spiritually, recalling the goodness of Jesus and our love for Him. After we receive Holy Communion, we should take time to pray silently, thanking Jesus for Himself. To receive Holy Communion, we must be free of mortal sin; to receive Holy Communion with mortal sin is a **sacrilege**.

Through Holy Communion, Jesus gives us:

- An increase in the divine life of sanctifying grace, and thereby a deeper union with God
- An increase in faith, hope, and charity
- A closer union with Himself and with every member of the Church
- A pledge of resurrection and our future glory united with Him in Heaven
- The forgiveness of our daily faults (venial sin) and the grace to overcome temptation
- The promise of actual graces to help us love God and others more

The Mass is both a **sacrifice** and a **meal**:

At the Mass, we re-present the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus on the cross. This does not mean that Jesus actually dies again, but we participate in a living reality, the one true sacrifice of Jesus. The Mass continues to participate in the Sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. While each Mass is a new sacrifice offered, by divine power, it participates in the one and the same sacrifice of Jesus.

The Mass is also a meal, whereby we are nourished with Christ's Body and Blood. The Jewish people believed that sharing a meal with someone meant they were bonded in a special way to each other; sharing a meal was sharing one's life with another. In the same way, the Holy Eucharist bonds us together as a Church, each sharing in Christ's life.

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The Mass has a specific structure, which we call the **Order of the Mass**. The order is basically the same since the earliest times of the Church. The Order of the Mass has four major parts:

I. Introductory Rites

- Greeting
- Penitential Rite (Confiteor and Kyrie)
- Gloria (omitted during Advent and Lent)
- Opening Prayer

II. Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading (Old Testament usually or Acts of the Apostles during Easter Season)
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading (from one of the Epistles)
- Alleluia or Gospel Acclamation during Lent
- Gospel
- Homily
- Profession of Faith (Creed)
- General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful)

III. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Offertory Procession and Prayers
- Prayer over the gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Preface
- Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy)
- Canon (Eucharistic Prayer Proper)
- Epiclesis (Calling down of Holy Spirit)
- Consecration (Words of Jesus at the Last Supper)
- Memorial Acclamation
- Anamnesis (Remembering Jesus' Passion, Death, & Resurrection)
- Supplices (Offering of prayers for Saints, Pope, Bishop, Clergy, living & deceased members of the Church)
- Great Amen
- Lord's Prayer (Our Father)
- Sign of Peace
- Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)
- Reception of Communion

IV. Concluding Rites

- Prayer After Communion
 - Blessing
 - Dismissal
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RECONCILIATION

Penance or Reconciliation is the sacrament by which Jesus, through the absolution by the priest, forgives sins committed after Baptism.

Matter: The confession of the sin and the doing of the penance.

Form: *"I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*

Basis in Scripture:

Throughout Scripture, Jesus forgave sins. After the resurrection, He appeared to the Apostles 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 20:22-23)

"Because of this we no longer look on anyone in terms of mere human judgment. If at one time we so regarded Christ, we no longer know Him by this standard. This means that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old order has passed away; now all is new! All this has been done by God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. I mean that God, in Christ, was reconciling the world to Himself; not counting man's transgressions against them, and that He has entrusted the message of reconciliation to us. This makes us ambassadors for Christ, God as it were appealing through us. We implore you, in Christ's name, be reconciled to God! For our sakes God made Him who did not know sin, to be sin, so that in Him we might become the very holiness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

Reconciliation or Penance, is the sacrament by which Jesus, through the absolution of the priest, forgives sins committed after Baptism.

Sin is an offense against God which in turn separates us from God's love. There are two types of sin:

- **Venial sin** is a lesser offence against God which does not deprive the soul completely or sanctifying grace but does lessen God's grace in the soul. Venial sin can lead to mortal sin if repeated and not corrected.
- **Mortal sin** is a serious offence against God which totally removes any grace in the soul. Mortal sin cuts us off completely from God. For a sin to be considered mortal, it must be (1) serious matter, (2) a free act of will, and (3) deliberately or fully intended after careful reflection.

We confess our sins to a priest because Christ gave His authority to the apostles and their successors to forgive sins in the Sacrament of Penance. Jesus no longer walks the earth in His physical body. Nonetheless, He continues His work as healer of souls through the Church and the Sacraments. He still gives peace and comfort by forgiving sins. Reconciliation is the sacrament of divine mercy. In His great love for sinners, Jesus has provided a means whereby His healing action can penetrate to every corner of the earth. On Easter Sunday, Jesus gave the power to forgive sins to the Apostles. The Church in turn has passed this power on to the priests when they are ordained.

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Moreover, sin offends both God and other people, and the sinner needs the forgiveness of both. The priest, who is the representative of both God and the Church, speaks for both. The priest absolves our sins and reconciles us both to God and to the Church.

To make a good confession, there are five steps:

1. **Examination of conscience.** The conscience is the ability of the intellect to determine what is good and what is bad according to the laws of God and the Church. When we examine our conscience, we try to recall the sins committed since our last confession. In doing this, we should not be careless, nor should we be excessive to the point of getting very anxious. Rather, we should pray for the help of the Holy Spirit, and give an honest look at our lives.
2. **Sorrow for sin.** We should have sorrow for sin because we have offended God and our neighbor. This sorrow for sin is called **contrition**.
3. **Firm Amendment.** We should have a resolution to avoid the sin in the future and amend one's life. Even though we may commit the same sins again, like impatience, when we go to confession we are not planning on committing those sins again.
4. **Confession** of the sin.
5. Acceptance of the penance and doing the penance. **Penance** helps heal the hurt caused by sin.

Practical Points:

- We should go to confession frequently, generally once a month. This allows us to examine our conscience and really take a good look at ourselves to see whether we are truly leading a life like Christ. The more we allow sins to multiply, the easier it is to sin.
 - We must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation when we are guilty of mortal sin because we must become reconciled to God before we may approach the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.
 - Reconciliation is a beautiful sacrament which allows us to unburden our souls and feel the mercy of God.
 - In examining one's conscience, it is a good practice to use the **Ten Commandments** and the **Precepts of the Church** as guidelines to see what areas one failed in or did not do as best we could.
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The Ten Commandments:

1. I am the Lord, your God; Thou shalt not have any other gods besides me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, Thy God, in vain.
3. Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath.
4. Honor thy father and 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 first three commandments reflect what Jesus said was **the greatest commandment** of all: "Love God with your whole heart, mind, and soul." The last seven commandments reflect what Jesus said was **the second greatest commandment**, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said that these two commandments sum up everything in the law of God.

The Precepts of the Church according to the Catechism of the Church (#2042-43):

1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor. (The Holy Days of Obligation in the United States are as follows: the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God (January 1); the Ascension; the Assumption (August 15); All Saints (November 1); the Immaculate Conception (December 8); and Christmas (December 25)).
2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
3. You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season. (A person must receive Communion at least once a year between the first Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.)
4. You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
5. You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church.

The Precepts of the Church are not an extensive or complete list of all the things that Catholics should do; instead, they are the "**very necessary minimum**" each Catholic needs to grow in the love of God and neighbor. The Church also decrees that each should:

1. Be married in the Catholic Church (if you marry) and teach your children the Catholic faith.
 2. Support the missionary work of the Church.
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The Sacraments p.12

HOLY ORDERS

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which Christ gives the power and the grace to perform the sacred duties of bishops, priests, and deacons.

Matter: The imposing of the bishop's hands

Form: *"We ask you, all-powerful Father, give these servants of yours the dignity of the presbyterate. Renew the Spirit of holiness within them. By your divine gift, may they attain the second order in the hierarchy and exemplify right conduct in their lives."* (This is called the Consecratory Prayer and is different depending upon whether a bishop, priest, or deacon is being ordained.)

Basis in Scripture:

Jesus called the Apostles to be His followers in a very special way. Also, Jesus designated St. Peter as the first Pope. At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." He thereby conferred the priesthood on the Apostles.

He went up the mountain and summoned those whom He wanted and they came to Him. He appointed twelve [whom He also named apostles] that they might be with Him and He might send them forth to preach and to have authority to drive out demons: Simon, whom He named Peter; James, son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James, whom He named Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus; Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him. (Mark 3:13-19)

"They presented these men to the Apostles, who first prayed over them and then imposed hands on them." (Call of deacons - Acts 6:6)

"On one occasion, while they were engaged in the liturgy of the Lord and were fasting, the Holy Spirit spoke to them: "Set apart Barnabas and Saul for me to do the work for which I have called them." Then after they had fasted and prayed, they imposed hands on them and sent them off." (Acts 13:2-3)

The sacrament of Holy orders is the one through which Christ gives the power and the grace to perform the sacred duties of bishops, priests, and deacons.

- **Bishops**, as a group, replace the twelve Apostles. They have the fullness of the priesthood. Their main work is to govern their diocese and to lead the people of God by teaching, ruling, and sanctifying them. Only the Bishop can ordain. The bishop of our diocese, the Arlington Diocese, is **Bishop Michael Burbidge**.
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- The work of a **priest** is the work of Christ. His main task is to help bring all people to Jesus Christ. Their work varies from parish assignments to missions to education; priests function to serve the people of the Church. Priests offer Mass, hear confessions and absolve sin, anoint the sick, baptize, confirm with permission of the bishop, and witness marriages. A bishop appoints a **pastor** to be the leader of a parish, which is a smaller part of his diocese. Our pastor is **Fr. William Saunders**. Sometimes a bishop will appoint a priest to help or assist a pastor at a large parish: this helper is called a **parochial vicar**. The parochial vicar at St. Agnes is **Fr. Andrew Haissig**.
- Deacons are of two types: transitional and permanent. **Transitional deacons** are those men who will eventually become priests; they have trained to become priests and will be ordained priests after being ordained a deacon. A **permanent deacon** a man, sometimes married, who wants to serve the church in the capacity of a deacon, but does not intend to become a priest. All deacons serve in various capacities by teaching, performing baptisms and marriages, visiting the sick, and assisting at Mass.

The teaching authority of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, is called the **Magisterium**. It is composed of the Pope and all the bishops in communion with him. Infallibility is a special gift from the Holy Spirit whereby the Church can teach without error on matters of faith and morals. The hierarchy is the structure of leadership in the Church. The following is the hierarchy of the Church and the territory over which each has authority (or jurisdiction);

The Pope has jurisdiction and authority over the whole Church
The Bishop has jurisdiction and authority over the diocese
The Priest has jurisdiction and authority over the parish
The Deacon assists the bishop and priests in different ways

MARRIAGE

Marriage is the sacrament by which Christ unites a Christian man and Christian woman as husband and wife.

Matter: The consummation of the marriage

Form: The exchange of marital vows

Basis in Scripture:

The Jews believed in marriage, but Jesus gave us a new teaching, perfecting marriage as a state of life blessed by God. Jesus said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two shall become one. Thus they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, let no man separate what God has joined." (Matthew 19:4-6)

Marriage is the sacrament by which Christ unites a Christian man and women in a life-long union, making them two in one flesh. In entering the marriage, the man and woman and God enter into a covenant whereby they pledge their mutual and total commitment to each other. Marriage is life lasting and indissoluble.

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ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Anointing of the Sick is the sacrament in which Jesus, through the anointing and prayers of the priest, gives health and strength to the person who is now seriously ill, awaiting a serious surgery, or preparing for death.

Matter: Anointing with the Oil of the Infirmed

Form: *"Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."*

Basis in Scripture:

Jesus often cured people when He was on earth and instructed the Apostles to do the same. "Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two, giving them authority over unclean spirits. With that they went off, preaching the need of repentance. They expelled many demons, anointed the sick with oil, and worked many cures." (Mark 6:7,12)

In the Letter of St. James, we find, "Is there anyone sick among you? He should ask for the priests of the Church. They in turn are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord. This prayer uttered in faith will reclaim the one who is ill, and the Lord will restore him to health. If he has committed any sins, forgiveness will be his. Hence, declare your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may find healing." (James 5:14-16)

The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is the sacrament in which Jesus, through the anointing and prayers of the priest, gives health and strength to the person who is now seriously ill, awaiting a serious surgery, or preparing for death.

Through the sacrament of the sick, Jesus

- Increases the divine life of grace in the ill person
 - Sometimes restores health to the person
 - Gives the actual graces needed to accept the illness
 - Forgives sin and removes the temporal punishment due to sin. When confession is impossible, even mortal sin is forgiven through this sacrament.
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Everything a Confirmed Catholic Should Know

The Prayers

OUR FATHER

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. Amen.

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.

THE 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; the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven, and is seated 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.

ACT OF CONTRITION

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

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN

Hail! Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, O most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement! O loving! O sweet Virgin Mary!

V. Pray for us, Oh Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Everything a Confirmed Catholic Should Know

MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation
The Visitation
The Nativity
The Presentation
The Finding in the Temple

The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection
The Ascension
Pentecost
The Assumption
The Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven & earth

The Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden
The Scourging at the Pillar
The Crowning with Thorns
The Carrying of the Cross
The Crucifixion

The Luminous Mysteries

The Baptism of the Lord
The Wedding Feast of Cana
The Proclamation of the Gospel
The Transfiguration
The Institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper

WORKS OF MERCY

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

To feed the hungry
To give drink to the thirsty
To clothe the naked
To shelter the homeless
To visit the sick
To visit the imprisoned
To bury the dead

THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

To counsel the doubtful
To instruct the ignorant
To admonish the sinner
To comfort the sorrowful
To forgive injuries
To bear wrongs patiently
To pray for the living and the dead

THE BEATITUDES (Matthew 5:3-12)

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.
Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure of heart: for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
