

Read the following passages and answer the questions at the end of the packet (pages 23-25). Only the answer sheets (pages 26) will be collected in September.

## Part I: The Church Celebrates

### Why the Church Celebrates

You have probably taken different religion classes since freshmen year and you have already discussed how:

- Humans are created in the image and likeness of God meaning we have the natural ability to recognize God's presence.
- God revealed himself to the Jewish people over time and the full account of salvation history is found in the Bible.
- Jesus as true God and true man is the fulfillment of God's revelation. The New Testament contains the narrative of his ministry and how his first followers spread the Good News.
- The Catholic Church carries on the mission and the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles.

This reading will focus on the Catholic way of worship, specifically the **Sacraments**.

Jesus' life – his words and actions – foretold what he was going to give the Church through the Sacraments he instituted. "The mysteries of Christ's life are the foundations of what he would henceforth dispense in the sacraments, through the ministers of his Church, for "what was visible in our Savior has passed over into his mysteries" (CCC 1115). The power of the Sacraments comes from the Body of Christ, the Church. Sacraments are the actions of the Holy Spirit working through the Church (CCC 1116). Just as she has done with Sacred Scripture and the teachings of Catholic faith, the Church recognized the Sacraments as a gift from Christ and has determined how they are administered.

*"Thus the Church has discerned over the centuries that among liturgical celebrations there are seven that are, in the strict sense of the term, sacraments instituted by the Lord."* ~CCC, 1117

The *Catechism* describes the Seven Sacraments in a double sense – they are by the Church and they are *for* the Church.

*"They are by the Church, for she is the sacrament of Christ's action at work in her through the mission of the Holy Spirit. They are "for the Church" in the sense that "the sacraments make the Church," since they manifest and communicate to men, above all in the Eucharist, the mystery of communion with the God who is love, One in three persons.* ~CCC, 1118

Sacraments are how we encounter God. We can also encounter God through the sacramental nature of his creation, meaning everything we touch, see, smell, hear, and taste. We recognize God's hand in our ability to see and appreciate truth. We can reason and make moral decisions. We know God through our relationships with him and other people.

We are born with the ability to love and the desire to love. Just as God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in relation with one another, we too can experience God through relationships. Our capacity to love and care for others give us insight into God. As in any relationship, God wants us to know him more fully because he loves us.

Another way we know God is through Scripture. In the Bible, we enter into salvation history where God spoke to his People, gradually revealing himself to us. In the Gospels, we enter into a relationship with Jesus. We meet God as a man in the coming of the Son – his final and greatest Revelation of himself. Jesus came to live among us, true God and true man. Through Jesus' baptism, we learn of the Trinity – the one God in three Divine Persons, the ultimate relationship of love (see CCC, 221). The Holy Spirit descended as a dove, and a voice from Heaven said: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11).

Through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition, we encounter the One who created us. Scripture is the written word of God inspired by its true author – the Holy Spirit. Sacred Tradition starts with the oral preaching of the Apostles that the Church has always taught. Both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are God's Revelation to us, and they have equal and essential roles in the Church. They must be honored equally. But Sacred Tradition is also distant from Sacred Scripture, encompassing the apostolic preaching and teachings that the Church defined as doctrines after the time of the Apostles. Through Sacred Tradition, the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship, perpetuates and transmits all that she is and believes.

In this Tradition, we begin Mass and many prayers in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. We are aware of our belief in the Trinity, but it has to become a belief in our hearts. With God's guidance, our natural ability to reason, and our growing relationship with God, we are able to delve deeper and deeper into this mystery – a never-ending journey of his infinite love. One thing we celebrate is the Sacrament is God's love for us and his will that we love him and each other.

Sacraments are a central element of our Catholic prayer and worship. Sacraments are visible signs of the unseen reality of God's *grace*. We call them "efficacious" signs because Sacraments make present that which they signify. Each time we take part in the Sacraments, we are standing in two realities, the one we can see, the outward sign of grace, and the unseen mystery, the divine love that is the body of Christ. Both are real and both are present. Sacraments are the threshold between the world of God that is unseen and the finite world of his Creation that comes to us as a result of his love. "The Church, then, both contains and communicates the invisible grace she signifies. It is in this analogical sense, that the Church is called a "sacrament" (CCC, 774).

While we may experience God daily in many personal ways, the Sacraments were given to us as a Church by Christ because no one person or group of people can be the entire Body of Christ. The Church administers the Sacraments and is also called a Sacrament because she contains and communicates Christ's grace. The Church, then, is the Sacrament of the Holy Trinity's communion with us. "The Church, then, both contains and communicates the invisible grace she signifies. It is in the analogical sense, that the Church is called a "sacrament". (CCC, 774).

"The Church is the visible plan of God's love for humanity, because God desires that the whole human race may become one People of God, form one Body of Christ, and be built into one temple of the Holy Spirit. ~CCC, 776

The Sacraments prepare us to conform our lives to God's. Grace given through the Sacraments prepares our soul to live with God and to act through his love (see CCC, Glossary, p.881). it is very important to appreciate the Trinity in order to understand the Sacraments. Christ instituted the Sacraments, which offer freely given gifts of grace from the Holy Spirit and eventually help us enter eternal life with the Trinity in Heaven. The Sacraments have their origins in the Trinity.

## Global Perspectives

There are many natural wonders of God's Creation, the visible result of his love for us. Various organizations have created lists naming the seven natural wonders of the world.

- The aurora borealis is a nature light display seen in high latitude regions.
- The Grand Canyon in Arizona was created by erosion caused by the Colorado River.
- Paricutin is a 10,000 foot cinder cone volcano in Mexico.
- Victoria Falls, on the boarder of Zambia and Zimbabwe, is the world's largest waterfall.
- Mount Everest is the highest peak on Earth and part of the Himalayan Mountains.
- Australia's Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest individual formation created by living organisms.
- The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil is the largest by (by volume) in the world.

The *Catechism* puts it this way: "Celebrated worthily in faith, the Sacraments confer the grace that they signify" (CCC, 1127). Jesus Christ himself is at work in each of the Sacraments. He is the principal minister. Christ is the one who baptizes God's grace, entrusted to the Church, is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. God the Father always hears the prayers of the Church in each Sacrament.

"As fire transforms into itself everything it touches, so the Holy Spirit transform into the divine life whatever is subjected to his power". ~ CCC, 1127

## Signs and Symbols

We as humans are composed of body and soul, and we understand spiritual aspects of life through physical signs and symbols. As social beings, humans communicate with signs and symbols, and the same is true for our relationship with God (see CCC, 1146). God also speaks to us through his creation. The material universe that see and experience helps us to perceive God. The wonders of creation communicate God to us and symbolize his power and his presence (see CCC, 1147). The physical realities around us can become ways to express God's sanctifying action in our lives as we as expressions of our worship of God.

“The same is true of signs and symbols taken from the social life of man: washing and anointing, breaking bread and sharing the cup can express the sanctifying presence of God and man’s gratitude toward his Creator. ~CCC, 1148

Sacramental celebrations include signs and symbols that represent the work of creation and human culture. The Sacraments always point to God’s plan for salvation and are rooted in the events of the Old Testament and fully revealed through Christ’s life through his paschal Mystery (see CCC, 1145).

“His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death, he destroyed death, and all that Christ is – all that he did and suffered for all men – participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection *abides* and draws everything toward life. ~CCC, 1085

The **liturgy** of the Church “presupposed, integrates, and sanctifies” these signs and symbols. They become signs of grace and what the *Catechism* describes as “the new creation in Jesus Christ” (CCC, 1149).

The Chosen People of the Old Testament were given signs and symbols from God to mark their liturgies. These were signs of the Covenant with God, including circumcision, anointing, consecrating, laying of hands, sacrifices, and most importantly, the Passover. “The Church sees in these signs a prefiguring of the sacraments of the New Covenant” (CCC, 1150). Jesus himself used signs and symbols from Creation to reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. In his ministry:

“He gives new meaning to the deeds and signs of the Old Covenant, above all to the Exodus and the Passover, for he himself is the meaning of all these signs. ~CCC, 1151

The seven Sacraments – Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders – use visible signs and symbols to communicate God’s hidden mysteries. As we study those signs and symbols, we must remember that God is communicating with us. What makes Sacraments different from other rituals is that sacramental signs are more than symbols. Through Christ’s redemptive actions, Sacraments bring about what they signify and symbolize. The waters of Baptism do more than wash over a person. Through these waters God is at work, washing away sin and the person is given new life in Christ.

Jesus often used the signs of creation in his most meaningful encounters with people: water and oil, bread and wine shared in a meal, hands laid on those who were sick or seeking forgiveness. He used stories of ordinary people and the signs of creation to tell his followers about the mysteries of the Kingdom of God and how to live in right relationships with God and others (see CCC, 1150-1152). We use these teachings of Jesus in the Sacraments because the Sacraments were instituted by Christ.

Through a sacramental view of the world, Catholics look at all reality through the eyes of Christ. All of God’s Creation can point us toward him, toward a closer union with Jesus, toward life in the Holy Spirit.

“It is Christ who, as the head of the Body, pours out the Spirit among his members to nourish, heal, and organize them in their mutual functions, to give them life, send them to bear witness, and associate them to his self-offering to the Father and to his intercession for the whole world. Through the Church’s sacraments, Christ communicates his Holy and sanctifying Spirit to the members of his Body. ~CCC, 739

## **The Church is Sacramental**

Jesus is talking to his Apostles. He has foretold his Death and betrayal. He tells the Apostles not to be troubled, for he has prepared a place for them in Heaven. He has been with them for a while at this point and he says: “You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas asks, “How can we know the way?” Jesus says he is the way, the truth, and the life, and he is the way to the Father. “If you know me, you know him.” Philip then asks Jesus to show the apostles the way to the Father. Jesus rephrases what he’s been trying to tell them, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:4-9).

In these passages, Jesus is revealing the truth that he is the living, ever-present Sacrament of God. He is present where two or three are gathered in his name. Jesus is present in the Word of God proclaimed at Mass, and in the celebrating priest as well. He is present most fully – Body, Soul, and Divine – in the Eucharist. “Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations” (CCC, 1088).

It is through Jesus that we most fully encounter God, he is the Son of God, the very Word of God. He came to us in a way that we could understand and embrace – true God and true man. He gave the Church, the Body of Christ, a missionary mandate to baptize disciples in all nations in the name of the Holy Trinity. He remains with us as he promised until the end of the age (see CCC, 849).

“Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be “the universal sacrament of salvation,” the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men. ~CCC, 849

Through Jesus, God touches us in the center of our being. We can encounter Jesus in the Sacraments, which he established as a means for us to continue a relationship with the Trinity through the Church. Through Jesus, salvation has come into the world; humanity is reconciled with God. The sin that affects all humans and the world we inhabit lost its power through the redeeming Passion of Christ as well as his Death, Resurrection and Ascension.

You may recall that Jesus’ Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension is called the *Paschal Mystery*. It is the mission of the Church to celebrate and live the Paschal Mystery through the ages until Jesus returns in glory at the end of time. It is the mission of the Church to do what Jesus did, to announce the Kingdom of God and to be a sign of the Kingdom until it is fulfilled. And so we pray with Jesus: “Your Kingdom come.” The Seven Sacraments each celebrate a special aspect of the Paschal Mystery. For example, in Baptism, we die to our old selves and are raised to new life. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we die to sinful actions and habits and experience a resurrection – a new beginning in a restored relationship with God. In the Eucharist, we share in Christ’s own suffering, Death, and Resurrection. The Sacraments are holy signs of God’s desire to share his life with us.

The *Catechism* describes the Church as “The universal sacrament of Salvation.” The bishops at the Second Vatican Council said, “the Church is in Christ like a Sacrament or a sign and instrument” (*Lumen Gentium, 1*) meant to exist between God and humankind, as well as of the unity of the human race itself. It is important to know that the bishops were drawing on the traditional theological understanding that a Sacrament helps to bring about that which it signifies. Thus, they were saying that the Church is God’s instrument to bring about that unity which the Church signifies – the unity between God and humanity, as well as among all people (see CCC, 775 and 780).

Understanding the Church as a Sacrament helps us to know that the Church has both a visible and an invisible reality.

- She is a hierarchical, ordered society with a historical presence and tangible, human aspects.
- She is also the Body of Christ, a spiritual reality that includes a divine aspect of her essential identity.
- We have seen that Jesus Christ, who is divine and human, is the Sacrament of God who mediates the Father’s salvation to us.
- Because the Church is the Body of Christ, it follows that she, too, is a Sacrament of God with both human and divine aspects to her fundamental nature.

The Church is a community of ordinary human beings. She is a place where people are connected to the larger mystery of God’s divine presence. When we say that the community of the Church is the presence or Sacrament of Christ on Earth, we point to the fact that this is a very specific way that Jesus still lives in our midst. The Church is the way that Jesus continues to be present among us throughout time. One of the ways this is expressed is when the Church is called the Mystical Body of Christ, or more simply, the Body of Christ. The Church is the Sacrament of our communion with God, and, through the Holy Spirit, she links us to the divine. The Holy Spirit is the life’s breath of the Catholic Church, and the Church is the Sacrament of the Trinity’s communion with us.

## Redemption Through the Sacraments

Through the centuries, Christ has continued to act in the lives of his followers through the Church and the Sacraments. The liturgy of the Church celebrates the presence of Christ in the world today. The Sacraments signal the activity of the Holy Spirit, sent to carry on the work of Christ in the Church. In the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit acts as the Body of Christ to build up the Church and bring the Kingdom of God to fullness.

Just as Jesus used signs and symbols from ordinary life to communicate his message, so does the Church in her Sacraments. The Catholic Church calls them Sacraments of faith because they nourish, strengthen, and express our faith. “The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ and, finally to give worship to God. Because they are signs

they also instruct” (CCC, 1123). Through the Sacraments, the Church also carries on Christ’s work of healing and forgiveness. “Christ has willed that in her prayer and life and action his whole Church should be the sign and instrument of the forgiveness and reconciliation that he acquired for us at the price of his blood” (CCC, 1442).

The sacramental signs of the Church transform each of us into holy men and women. The Sacraments of the Church take the signs of nature and the symbols of humans and put them into focus. Through them, we can understand how God touched the depths of our lives. Jesus’ Death and Resurrection experienced through the Sacraments gives us a glimpse of eternal life that shares the divine nature of God, a life of truth, joy, peace, and love.

Therefore the signs of human culture, of the Old Covenant with the ancient Israelites, and those used by Jesus to reveal the Kingdom make the plan of salvation present through the Sacraments of the Church. These signs “prefigure and anticipate the glory of heaven” (CCC, 1152).

We will explore the meaning embedded by Jesus in each Sacrament and implemented by the Holy Spirit in the Church. As with all mysteries of faith, the Sacraments will always be greater than our ability to fully understand them. But as Saint Anselm teaches us, believe so you may understand.

## Eastern Catholic Churches

In the West, the expression, “Roman Catholic Church,” refers to the Church centered on Rome and under the leadership of the Pope. She uses the Roman Rite liturgy that is sometimes referred to as the Western Rite. The Church in Rome was not the earliest Christian community. The earliest followers of Jesus lived in the area now known as *Israel*. From there, the Church spread into Asia Minor, Greece, present-day Europe (including Rome during the lifetime of Saints Peter and Paul), northern Africa, and beyond. Rome became the center of the Catholic Church after Peter, the first Pope, went there to minister.

### Saints Cyril and Methodius

(827-869) and (826-885)

Saint Cyril and Methodius were ninth century brothers from the Greek community of Thessalonica. They both lived in a monastery on the Bosphorous when a request was sent out for someone to teach the Khazar people about Christianity. Cyril was chosen for the position, and his brother accompanied him to Eastern Europe to help teach the Khazar. They both learned the language and helped to make many converts. Soon afterward Cyril and Methodius relocated again to help teach the Moravians in their own native tongue. The brothers both became fluent in the Slavic languages, eventually developing a Slavic alphabet and translating the Gospels and the necessary liturgical books for the Slavic people.

They began to preach in Slavonic, which caused officials to distrust them. They were summoned to Rome by Nicholas I. upon their arrival, which took time in those days, they found the successor to the throne, Adrian II, who treated them with kindness and respect and encouraged their missionary activity, sanctioned the Slavonic liturgy, and ordained both Cyril and Methodius as bishops.

Because of their extensive travels to preach the Gospel, Cyril and Methodius are known as the patron saints of Europe.

To this day, many Church communities in the East have their own forms of liturgy and are in union with Rome, meaning they accept the authority of the Pope. They hold the same beliefs and celebrate the same Sacraments, which they call Mysteries. With the migration of peoples, many *Eastern Catholic Churches* are now active in countries that were originally solely, “Roman.”

One Eastern Catholic Church that has always been in union with Rome is the Maronite Rite, which dates back to the fourth century. This Rite began near Antioch with the hermit Saint Maron; Christian community in Syria grew and expanded into Lebanon, where it is centered today. Some other Eastern Catholic Churches were involved in the Eastern Schism of 1054, when disagreement split the Church. The Great Schism divided the Church in the East, based in Constantinople, and the Church in the West, based in Rome. Over the centuries, various national and local groups returned to the authority of the Church in Rome, but maintained liturgical celebrations as they were celebrated in the East. The Eastern churches not in union with the Pope are usually called *Orthodox*. Those in union with Rome are referred to as the Eastern Catholic Churches.

The Eastern Catholic Churches use the term *Mystery* for Sacrament. This comes from the Greek word *mysterion*, which literally means “a truth whispered.” The celebrations of the Sacraments differ somewhat from sacramental celebrations in the

Roman Rite. At their core, the Mysteries are the same as sacraments, but there is a distinctly Eastern tone to them. Vestments, language, and some prayers, and liturgy styles differ from that of the Western Church. The Mass, also called *The Divine Liturgy*, is often much longer in the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Incense is often used and a dialogue chat between priest and people in the norm. Often icons, or devotional paintings, are prominent in the churches, sometimes placed on a dividing framework or screen that stands between the celebrant and the congregation.

### Liturgy and the Sacraments

The word *liturgy* is a Greek term that means “service in the name of/on behalf of the people” (CCC, 1069). It is a special work we do when we gather as the holy People of God. Worship the Father who has blessed us in Christ Jesus and delivered us from the power of sin and the tragic consequences of sin. We worship Jesus who redeemed us and we worship the Holy Spirit who sanctified us. In a real sense, the liturgy includes everything we do. The Second Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes* (“Joy and Hope”) begins with this sentence:

*“The Joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. ~Gaudium et Spes, 1*

People worship God in many ways and each prayerful expression is a response to God. When individuals pray and *worship*, they acknowledge God and offer him praise and adoration. Saint Augustine wrote that our hearts remain restless until they rest in the Lord. Responding to God is a universal human experience of course, not every person is religious, but it is within our human nature to seek a relationship with God through prayer. Eight out of ten teenagers pray regularly, for example.

We sometimes pray alone, and we sometimes pray together. Jesus also prayed both ways and taught the Apostles to do the same. Praying as a community is essential to our faith. Prayer requires action. In a sense, actions often complete prayer. This is why Jesus reminded the Pharisee that the Greatest Commandment is to love the Lord, and you neighbor. The Epistle of John teaches:

*“Those who say, “I love God” and hate their brothers and sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.”*

The Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life” (CCC, 1324), and those seeking to live an authentic spiritual life with Jesus understand that praying and worshipping in community, as Church, is an absolute necessity.

God the Father gave us Jesus to save us, to reconcile us with him. Jesus gave us the Church so that he could continue to teach us as he did his disciples two thousand years ago. It is through Jesus and his Church that God’s salvation comes to us. Through the Church, God shares his life with us and enrich us with his grace through the Seven Sacraments. The Church is herself “a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race” (*Lumen Gentium, 1*).

### The Church Celebrates

The Sacraments are by the Church because Christ works her through the Holy Spirit and the Sacraments are for the Church because they communicate to us the mystery of communion with God. The Eucharist communicates this mystery above all the Sacraments (see CCC, 1118). Because of Jesus’ presence in the Church, the Eucharistic liturgy is the work of the Trinity and of the community, the People of God. In the Church’s liturgy, Jesus offers God the Father the prayer of praise and thanks of all humanity for all times. Keep in mind that through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is always our High Priest at Mass. He is the principal priest, and the ordained priest is chosen by him to act in his person. God the Father is the Source of the Divine Liturgy; we encounter Jesus our Savior, and receive through the *invocation* of the *Holy Spirit*.

*“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who is every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.”*  
*Hebrews 4:15*

The liturgy is more profound than any other celebration. Our liturgy includes more than those physically gathered in a church; it is part of an unceasing heavenly liturgy in which the community on Earth celebrates with all the saints in Heaven. We miss our loved ones when they die, but we continue to celebrate the liturgy with those who have passed on. The liturgy is the

Church's official public prayer. It is the prayer of the entire Communion of Saint – the faithful of the Church, both living and dead.

*"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. ~ Roman Missal*

This is what the Church brings to liturgy – the entire people, the entire world, all that rises us up, all that we are and all that we do. Just as Jesus offered everything he did to the Father, so we bring our whole selves to God and offer up every part of our lives in service to the Kingdom of God.

We bring our prayers of thanksgiving, intercession, and petition to Mass. We bring all that we are experience in our lives, both the good and the bad – new jobs, separation, death in the family, new birth in the family, etc.

**Personal Prayer**

The Church is at prayer in the liturgy through which we take part in Christ's own prayer to the Father in the Holy Spirit. We share in his common priesthood, but there are certain members who are called to serve through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The ordained bishops and priests act in the person of Christ through the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the Book of Revelation reveals the heavenly and eternal Liturgy. "It is the eternal liturgy that the Spirit and the Church enables us to participate whenever we celebrate the mystery of salvation in the sacraments" (CCC, 1139).

All Christian prayer has the liturgy as its "source and goal" (CCC, 1073). Prayer then is one of the main ways we communicate with God for that reason is essential for all believers. Through prayer we are in God's presence and this is possible because our Baptism has united us with Christ. "In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit" (CCC, 2565).

So God does not leave us alone to figure out how to pray. The Holy Spirit is with us to nudge us along and to gather up our needs and desires, our praise, our thanksgiving, to raise us up in prayer. The Holy Spirit calls us to pray at all times, instructing the Church in the ways of prayer, inspiring us to new ways of expressing the key forms of prayer: blessing and adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise.

Our personal prayer may be expressed in three important ways. The first expression is vocal prayer, a prayer that uses words, either silent or spoken, alone or with others. The Lord's Prayer, given to us by Jesus, is probably our most commonly used vocal prayer. Vocal prayer is not just words. Our mind and our body are at attention as our spirit raises our thoughts to God.

Meditation is the second expression of prayer. Meditation is reflective prayer in which we center ourselves and place ourselves in God's presence. In this expression of prayer, we reflect on Scripture, the life and teachings of Jesus, the mysteries of faith and what God is calling us to. We communicate with God and make decisions on how to better live according to his will. Meditation involves our intellect, our imagination, our emotions, and our will.

Forms of Prayer	
Blessing and Adoration	God blesses us, and we bless God for his many Gifts. We acknowledge God as our Creator and offer him homage.
Petition	We express our awareness of our relationship with God and ask him for forgiveness and for the things we need.
Intercession	The Holy Spirit intercedes for us. We, in turn, petition God on behalf of others. Just as we beg God's mercy, so we are merciful to others.
Thanksgiving	We thank God for all he has given us a individuals, as Church, as image of himself in the goodness of Creation.
Praise	We praise God because he is God, great beyond all measure.

The third expression of prayer is contemplation. In contemplative prayer, we “sit with God.” we enter into loving relationship with God. The *Catechism* calls contemplation “a gaze of faith fixed on Jesus” (CCC, 2724). It is a silent union with God.

## The Lord’s Day

The Jewish Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday evening and concludes at sundown on Saturday. The Sabbath recalls the seventh day of Creation in the first Creation account in Genesis; it is a day of rest, study, and prayer. On Friday evening, Jewish families gather for meals, which begins with lighting candles and praying.

One of the ways that the early Christians transformed the Jewish tradition they inherited was the observance of Sunday as the Lord’s Day. Instead of continuing to make Saturday the Sabbath, the followers of Jesus began to meet faithfully every Sunday to celebrate their sacred fellowship meal “in Remembrance” of him, just as he had commanded at the Last Supper. They did this despite the fact that Sunday was an ordinary workday. During times of persecution, they gathered in secret to avoid being discovered, which could lead to prison or death.

Christians gathered on Sunday because it was the day of the Lord’s Resurrection. They soon came to think of Sunday as the day that fore-shadowed Jesus’ final return in glory at the end of time. So, for the Christians, Sunday looked back in remembrance and forward in anticipation. The intersection of these two perspectives (past and future) was the *present* moment, a sacred time when the followers of Jesus recognized his presence among them. They came to see that Jesus was transforming their earthly reality into a sacred experience of salvation. We still retain an expression of this viewpoint when we say, “We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your *Resurrection until you come again.*” (*Roman Missal*) The importance of Sunday in the Christian tradition is obvious from the fact that the Church requires every Catholic to participate in Mass on that day.

In the Genesis account of creation, God is said to rest on the seventh day. Rest is another important practice for Sunday. The Catholic Church teaches that Sunday helps people by allowing them “sufficient rest and leisure to cultivate their familiar, cultural, social, and religious life” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 67). People are not made for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for people. That doesn’t mean doing nothing; it means finding ways to receive ourselves.

Think about what happens to you mentally and physically when you are stressed and over-worked, running on empty. It’s easier to get sick. Your mind goes blank. You can’t concentrate. You might become short tempered and snap at those you love. Life gets ugly. No one can go on and on without a break.

In the second century, Saint Justin Martyr wrote a report for the emperor and described the worship of the Christians of that time. It sounds remarkably familiar to our own liturgy, including the Sacraments. Read the following from the *Catechism*.

1345 As early as the second century we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. They have stayed the same until our own day for all that great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

- On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place.
- The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits.
- When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.
- Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves ... and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation.
- When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss.
- Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren.
- He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: eucharistian) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.
- When he concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: “Amen.”
- When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those who we call deacons give to those present the “Eucharistic” bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.



## The Church's Sacraments

There are reasons we say that Jesus instituted the Seven Sacraments. Jesus asked his Apostles to baptize in his name, to offer God's forgiveness, and to shepherd his people and continue his ministry of healing. He told them to continue his sacrifice in the sharing of his Body and Blood. And he sent the Holy Spirit to enlighten and guide them. The Sacraments flow from the actions to which Jesus calls his followers: baptize, forgive, recognize and celebrate his Real presence (Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity), accept new members confirm, pray for healing, determine new leaders. Notice how each of these actions is central to the way we celebrate Sacraments today.

*"In their age of the Church Christ now lives and acts in and with his Church, in a new way appropriate to this new age. He acts through the sacraments in what the common Tradition of the East and the West calls "the Sacramental economy"; this is the communication (or dispensation) of the fruits of Christ's Paschal mystery in the celebration of the Church's "sacramental" liturgy.* ~CCC, 1076

The Sacraments accompany us from birth to death, giving religious meaning to those who live the liturgy as the basic rhythm of their lives. They provide us with Christ's way of experiencing the grace we need for our spiritual journey from God and back to God. There is only one way on Earth to experience the Sacraments: through participation in the Church.

The rites – the words and the actions known as the form and matter – of the Sacraments are not empty signs. They hold power and they reflect sacred mystery. Given to us by Christ, they don't simply point to something else (a sacred reality); they make the reality present. This is what the Church means when she says the Sacraments are efficacious, or effective signs of grace. They confer the grace they signify, or point to – new life, membership, healing, forgiveness, and do on (see CCC, 1127).

*"There are efficacious because in terms Christ himself is at work; it is he who baptizes, he who acts in his sacraments in order to communicate the grace that each sacrament signifies* ~CCC, 1127

Each of the Seven Sacraments, when we are open to them in faith, gives us an experience of God's presence – the Holy Spirit working in our lives in the way that the ritual's meaning points us toward. Sacraments give us a taste of the heavenly liturgy that is our common destiny.

While the practice of the Sacraments goes back to the beginning of the Church, the twelfth century master of the sentences known as Peter Lombard gave this definition: " A sacrament is in such a manner an outward sign of inward grace that it bears its image and is its cause" (*New Advent*). This grounded subsequent definitions. It was in the Middle Ages that the Catholic Church formally affirmed the number of Seven Sacraments and their names. This took place during the Council of Florence in 1439. The list of Sacraments was again confirmed with the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The Seven Sacraments celebrated by the Catholic Church are divided into three categories, one related to initiation of Christians, one to healing, and one to vocation.

## Signs of Grace

The *Catechism* tells us that "Grace is favor, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life" (CCC, 1996). Grace is our participation in the very life of God that helps us live according to his calling. Our participation in the life of God is internal as well as external. We are close to God as our heart is to our body. Jesus has reconciled us with God the Father and brought us back into relationship with him. Through Jesus, we are in a grace relationship with God the Father, and each Sacrament gives a special grace.

The Seven Sacraments	
Sacraments of Initiation	Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
Sacraments of Healing	Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick
Sacraments at the Service of Communion	Holy Orders and Matrimony

*"Sacramental grace" is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament. The Spirit heals and transforms those who receive him by conforming to the Son of God.* ~CCC, 1129

The *Catechism* explains grace as two types: sanctifying and actual. Sanctifying grace refers to our participation in the life of God, to the supernatural gift that unites us with God. Sanctifying grace is also called habitual grace because it is a permanent disposition to live in response to God's calling. It is divine friendship – God's gift to us and our continual life in his presence.

Made in the image of God, through the grace of Christ we are sanctified in him, made holy. We see this in a visible way in the Sacrament of Baptism.

Actual grace is special help from God to assist us in doing good and avoiding evil. God not only draws us into his very life, he gives us all the help we need to live as his children. Actual grace is freely given by God and completely undeserved by us – the very definition of a gift. Through the action of the Holy Spirit, God is always present to help us make good and right decisions that keep us in relationship with him or call us back to relationship. God's grace will always be there to help us live as children of God and followers of Jesus. God's grace binds us to each other in faithfulness and charity.

Each Sacrament brings with it special grace. These graces help us live out our vocation as Catholics within a community of disciples – the Church.

## Catholic Living

Catholic identity is a common topic of discussion among the faithful today. What makes a person Catholic? What causes people to identify themselves as Catholic? Are there requirements? Outward signs that others can see?

Sacraments often appear on people's lists of Catholic characteristics or requirements. There's a good reason for this. Sacraments are part of full, conscious and active participation in the life of the Church. The Eucharist, especially, is the source and summit of our lives as Catholics. Our participation needs to match that reality.

The Liturgy of the Word is often part of the celebration of the Sacraments. Sacred Scripture informs and enhances these celebrations. It reminds us of our religious origins, our story. Scripture connects us to our past with words to live by today.

## Sacramental

We have discussed the nature of the liturgy as embodied or sacramental prayer. The liturgy has God as its source and goal. It is comprised of divine actions and human signs and symbols, and is the way that the *incarnation* Christ acts among his followers. In fact, all Seven Sacraments provide the recipient and encounter with Christ.

As Catholics, we make use of incense and candles, statues and icons and prayers like the Rosary – a wide range of symbols and images and words that tap into the religious nature of the human person. There is a whole reservoir of what is called popular devotions that nourish the faith of the ordinary Catholics and draw us into the mystery of God. These symbols and rituals are called *sacramental* because they prepare us for the Sacraments.

Sacramental can be simple rituals, such as making the Sign of the Cross with holy water. They can also be types of prayers, such as the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, or Eucharistic Adoration.

*The feast of Saint Francis of Assisi is October 4. On that day, many churches bless pets and animals either individually or as a group. For many people, pets are integral part of their lives. They love and cherish them and see them as examples of God's great Creation. The following is from the Book of Blessings and might be read at Mass held on Saint Francis' feast day.*

*The animals of God's creation inhabit the skies, the earth, and the sea. They share in the fortunes of human existence and have part in human life. God, who confers his gifts on all living things, has often used the service of animals or made them symbolic reminders of the gifts of salvation.*

*Animals were saved from the flood and afterwards made a part of the covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:9-10). The paschal lamb brings to mind the Passover sacrifice and the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt (Exodus 12:3-14); a giant fish saved Jonah (Jonah 2:1-11); ravens brought bread to Elijah (1Kings 17:6); animals were included in the repentance enjoined on humans (Jonah 3:7). And animals share in Christ's redemption of all of God's creation. We therefore invoke the divine blessing on these animals through the intercession of St. Francis of Assisi. As we do let us praise the Creator and thank him for setting us over other creatures of the earth. Let us also ask that, remembering our human dignity, we may walk always in his law.*

They are also reflected in sacred objects, such as crucifixes, rosaries, holy water, blessed oil, ashes, and palms.

Blessings are important sacramental. Catholics bless many things, from individuals to buildings. Blessings are the Church's way of saying *everything* is part of God's world, and *everything* can be a source of praise and a reason for heartfelt gratitude. One familiar blessing is the blessing of pets on the feast of Saint Francis on October 4. Some Catholic parents bless their children as

they tuck them in at night. Some families say a prayer asking for God's blessing as they begin a drive or pray the Rosary on a long trip. Many families pray a grace before meals.

The Church's sacramental have carried the faith of millions of ordinary believers through life's toughest times, as well as through moments of joy and happiness. They are God's *ordinary* way of being part of our lives, and they prepare us for the *extraordinary* encounter with God that we share in the Sacraments.

**\*\*answer questions on page 23 -25**

## Part II: A Life in Christ

### God's Plan for Us

The Gospel according to Matthew tells us the account of the rich young man who approached Jesus to ask what he needed to do to get to Heaven. "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" (*Matthew 19:16*). This is a great universal question for each of us. The young man knew that there was a connection between doing good and getting into Heaven. He knew that doing good, what we call morality, is an expectation for everyone seeking eternal life.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes *mortality* as "the ways, the rules of conduct that lead to the promised beatitudes; it proscribes the ways of evil which turn (*mankind*) away from God and his love" (*CCC, 1950*). This definition connects the themes of holiness and happiness. Living a moral life leads us to God, who is the ultimate source of our happiness. In contrast, immorality, or sinning, leads us away from God and does not allow us to become the kind of people God wants us to be.

God Has equipped us with a natural moral law that is engraved in the heart of every person. It allows us to tell the difference between a good act and an evil act. The natural law is "human reason ordaining him to do good and forbidding him to *sin*" (*CCC, 1954*). Moral law is "a fatherly instruction from God" (*CCC, 1975*). It leads to happiness and condemns those actions that lead to evil. Our morality starts from the intimacy of love – the love of the Trinity and the love of the Father for his children.

The rich young man is not named in the Gospel according to Matthew. He asks a timeless question that everyone is called to answer with their lives. It is about the moral good and eternal life. The man senses a connection between morality and eternal life. Pope Saint John Paul II in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* ("*The Splendor of Truth*") answers why the young man posed the question to Jesus of Nazareth. Like us, the young man likely was drawn to Jesus and that led to new questions within him about moral good.

*"He Feels the need to draw near to the One who had begun his preaching with this new and decisive proclamation: "the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel" (Mk. 1:15).*

~Pope Saint John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*

In this reading we will address not only what the moral life is today, but why it is important to live a moral life today. We will look at the commandments, rules, and characteristics we need to live a moral life, but also how to live the moral life and make connections between the moral life and the life of young people today.

Throughout this reading, we will consider various expressions of the law: natural, divine, Church, and civil. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Catholic faith is that we believe God has written on the souls of all human being a moral sense that enables us to discern the difference between good acts and evil acts, between truth and lies. This original moral sense is called *natural law*. God has engraved in our hearts a sense of right and wrong that, when we follow it, forbids us to sin. The natural law cannot be destroyed or removed from us, even when we reject it. It has served as a foundation for morality in all cultures throughout history, but it can be difficult to understand clearly. That's why we also need God's grace and his revealed law (*see CCC, 1960*).

We can tell the difference between a good act and a bad act by means of our *conscience*, which is, "the interior voice of a human being, within whose heart the inner law of God is inscribed" (*CCC, Glossary, p.872*). our consciences have to be formed, so that we learn what God has written in our hearts. This education of our conscience takes place throughout our lives. It begins when we are children figuring out what is right and wrong. Our loved ones, Church teaching, Scripture, and prayer help us form a correct conscience. As we grow, our conscience urges us to live a virtuous life. We learn to steer away from or overcome fear, selfishness, and pride. When formed properly, our conscience protects us from resentment caused by

guilt, complacency, and other human faults (see CCC, 1784). At the appropriate time, our conscience indicates those acts that are good and warns of those acts that are evil.

### *God's Plan for Salvation*

The natural law helps us discern good from evil and truth from lies. Pope Leo XIII explained that the natural law has the force of law because it comes from God and helps us interpret his higher reason (see CCC, 1954). It is one-way God communicates with us. This is why Saint Paul tells us that the law is not meant for the innocent person (see 1 Timothy 1:9). Faithful people naturally follow the law that God has written on their hearts. At the same time, the Original Sin from the first parents' makes it difficult for all to understand the natural law clearly and immediately (see CCC, 1960).

Our deepest desire to be close to God because he possesses all that is good and what we truly desire – love, peace, and joy. We know that sin separates us from the Lord. “Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for” (CCC, 27). We cannot live fully without acknowledging God's love and giving ourselves to him. God is the source and end to all that it means to be alive. We receive our *dignity* because God has created us in his image and likeness and united us to himself through his divine grace. As a result, every human being has dignity. He created us to share his eternal love and happiness in Heaven. The natural law expresses our human dignity and sets the standard for our basic rights and responsibilities (CCC, 1956).

*“By his providence God protects and governs all things he has made, “reaching mighty from one end of the earth to the other, and ordering all things well. For all are open and laid bare to his eyes, even those things which are yet to come into existence through the free action of creatures.”*  
~CCC, 302

The Holy Spirit, through divine inspiration, is the primary author of Sacred Scripture. He attributes actions to God letting us know that God has absolute sovereignty over all of history and the world. Through Scripture we learn to trust the Lord. “Good things and bad, life and death, poverty and wealth, come from the Lord” (Sirach 11:14).

As sons and daughters of God, we are called to trust. Jesus asks us to trust in God the Father because he takes care of even our smallest needs: “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).as our needs are met, however, we must remember that they are given by God (see CCC, 304-305).

Catholic morality refers to the way that we lead our lives in response to God's law written in our souls. We call it a response because God always reaches out to us first. A Christian “no longer stands before God as a slave, in servile fear, or as a mercenary looking for wages, but as a son responding to the love of him “first loved us” (CCC, 1828). No matter how much we may forget or reject God, he never stops calling us to eternal life and happiness. We know that on our journey of discipleship within the Body of Christ we can say, “I will praise you with an upright heart, when I learn of your righteous ordinances” (Psalm 119:7).

## **Providence and Evil**

While God is master of his plan, he makes use of us to cooperate and to carry it out. This is not a sign of weakness on our part. “For God grants his creatures not only their existence, but also the dignity of acting on their own” (CCC, 306). He has given us the responsibility to care for his creation on Earth.

We participate in God's divine plan through our good behavior, through our unceasing prayer, and through our suffering. Sometimes, however, we don't know or see how we are collaborating with God's will. When we do enter into God's plan, we become “co-workers for his kingdom” (CCC, 307).

We can be sure that God is acting through us when we do good. Our faith tells us that God is at work in the actions of those he created. Saint Paul affirms this when he writes: “There are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone” (1 Corinthians 12:6). Jesus gave us an image for that when he said:

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing”.*

So why then does evil exist? There is no easy answer to this question. Evil exist because, while we are given free will to do good, we often have a tendency to choose to do evil instead. Evil is a consequence of *free will* given to humans, however, without free will, we would not be capable of true goodness. God gives us free will because he wants is to choose the good.

While no one part of our faith can fully explain the mystery of evil, collectively our faith as a whole can show what happens to overcome evil in the world. These gifts include:

- The goodness of creation
- The drama of sin and the patient love of God
- The redemptive *Incarnation* of God the Son through the Paschal Mystery
- The gift of the Holy Spirit
- Jesus' gathering of the Church
- The power of the Church's Sacraments
- Jesus' call to a blessed life (*see CCC, 309*).

We are invited to enter into the faith of the Church, but some people turn away from it. God could have created any kind of world he wanted. He could always make something better, as Saint Thomas Aquinas put it, but he chose to create a world that includes free will. This began with Adam and Eve. Through their Original Sin, sin and death entered the world. We add to this sinful condition through our own personal sins.

God's promise of a Redeemer gave us another chance and through Jesus' Death and Resurrection, we have been saved. "The Son of God assumed human nature and became man in order to accomplish our salvation in that same human nature" (*CCC, Glossary, p. 883*). However, to be saved through our own free will, we must have to follow the path of salvation that Jesus won for us. On the journey, we experience pain and love, good and evil, as we prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus and our eventual return to God. We are all in a process of becoming. Until the end of the world, evil will exist alongside good (*see CCC, 310*).

### Saint Damien of Molokai (1840-1889)

In 1840, Johannes and Anne-Catherine De Veuster named their newest son Joseph. As the youngest De Veuster grew up in Tremelo, Belgium, everyone noticed that he had an "all or nothing" attitude about everything he did.

Joseph was most passionate about his love for God and a determination to become an "all or nothing" priest and missionary. In religious life, Joseph took the name Damien to honor a third-century martyr. Right before ordination, he was sent to missions in the Kingdom of Hawaii. As a young priest, he was pastor for several parishes on the main island, Oahu.

At the time, Hawaii was a busy destination for European and American trading ships, but those visitors brought diseases. Epidemics broke out, and thousands died. The spread of leprosy was especially virulent. In 1865, the king approved a quarantine for lepers who were transported to the island of Molokai. They were given food and basic supplies, but that was it. Everyone knew that leprosy, a disfiguring and hideous disease, imposed a death sentence.

On 1873, 33-year-old Father Damien volunteered for Molokai. He wanted these abandoned people to know that God loved them deeply. He arrived several years after the leper colony had been established. Bitter, suspicious people were fighting each other for survival. As a priest and friend, Damien began to calm them, establishing peace and order.

Molokai's new pastor then got to work. He started building houses for his parishioners. Good, clean places to live restored their spirits. He also built a church, developed farms, an orphanage, and horseback riding programs. He also offered Catholic religious education. As the years went by, Father Damien restored pride, dignity, and hope among the people. His congregation loved him deeply. He tended to their wounds when they were dying. He built coffins and dug their graves when God called them home.

Inevitably. Father Damien also contracted leprosy, known as Hansen's disease. He died on April 15, 1889, after suffering with the disease for five years. His face and arms were covered with open sores. The flesh on his fingers was rotting and falling away. Only 49 years old, he had given his life for his people. Father Damien was canonized in October 11, 2009.

Saint Thomas Aquinas reasoned that evil can exist under God, but that evil actions do not come from God. Evil comes from the voluntary actions of a person's free will, he said. "In the act of the will then is to be sought the root and origin of what in the moral is sin," the saint wrote. While some ask is there is a God, why does evil exist? Aquinas turned that argument around: "If there is evil, there is a God. For there would be no evil, if the order of goodness were taken away" (*Summa Contra Gentiles, III, 71*).

Saint Thomas Aquinas makes an interesting argument that we know more about good in the world when we contrast it with evil. He said there is much good that would not exist in the world without evil – things such as justice and courage. Evil may result from actions, but we desire and strive for good results. As an analogy, he offered that sick people know best what a blessing good health is.

*“Evil things have their origin in the breaking down of good things, and still from them good things again take their rise by the providence of the ruler, as an interval of silence makes music sweet.”*

~Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 71

We can think about it this way: we are aware of light because of darkness and darkness because of light. As intelligent and free beings, we move toward our ultimate destinies through our choices and where we place our affections. Therefore, we can miss the mark, as we know, we sin. The *Catechism* makes the point that God permits moral evil because he respects our freedom as his created beings, and he knows how to achieve goodness from evil.

*“Foe almighty God ... because he is supremely good, would never allow any evil whatsoever to exist in his works if he were not so all-powerful and good as to cause good to emerge from evil itself.”*

~Saint Augustine

Evil does not ever become a good thing, even though good may result from it. Saint Catherine of Siena wrote in *Dialogue on Providence* that, “Everything comes from love, all is ordained for the salvation of man, God does nothing without this goal in mind.” It would be great if all the ways of God were known to us, but we can never know all the mysteries of God.

### Christ’s Example For Us

Jesus never strayed from his Father’s will. He lived in perfect communion with God. It is Christ’s example that we are called to follow. We have been invited to live God’s sight, he “who sees in secret” (*CCC*, 1693).

Saint Leo the Great urged Christians to recognize our dignity because we share in God’s nature, which is loving, forgiving, and reasoning. “Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God,” he wrote. One way we take part in God’s Divine Nature is through the Sacraments. The grace of Christ and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive from the Seven Sacraments help us to live a life “worthy of the gospel of Christ” (*CCC*, 1692). Prayer also helps us live this life.

The Sacraments and our conversations with God are signs that he did not abandon us after sin entered the world. In fact, God continues to call us and to announce that coming victory over evil that resulted from the Fall of Adam and Eve. After the Fall and the disruption of the Original Harmony of creation, we read what is called the Protoevangelium, or first Gospel (see *CCC*, 410). It is the first announcement of the Messiah and Redeemer. It describes the struggle between the serpent and the woman, and the final victory of her descendant. When God spoke to the serpent, he said:

*“I will not put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”*

~Genesis 3:15

From the creation of the first humans, we see that the world can be a place of darkness and light and the human race can do both good and evil. We have studied how God revealed himself to our first parents, and after they sinned against him, gave them the promise of redemption by offering them a *covenant*. Under the Old Covenant, God revealed his guidelines for living, the Ten Commandments or *Decalogue*, a term that means “ten words.” These “ten words” are a summary of God’s Law (*CCC*, 2058). They helped God’s People know and understand the requirements of natural law (*CCC*, 2071). The Ten Commandments are best understood in the context of God’s covenant with his People. The *Catechism* notes that the Ten Commandments use the you/I language of a dialogue between God and his People (for example, “I am the Lord your God,” “You shall have no other God’s before me”). In the Old Testament, we see that God repeatedly reaffirmed his covenant with his Chosen People. In exchange for loving and serving him, he pledged to be our one true God, our caring and protective Father, who would send his people a messiah and savior. In time, God sent his only Son. Jesus reaffirmed the Commandments, but also revealed further their purpose and meaning. The Church continues to affirm the Ten Commandments, now understood more fully in the light of the teaching of Jesus and his Apostles.

### The Word Becomes Flesh

God our Creator made everything that exists by calling it forth. The Book of Genesis says that God began creating by ordering light and dark into existence. “Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light ... God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (*Genesis 1:3,5*).

Whatever God spoke came into existence to fulfill his will. After light and dark, came the waters, the dry land, plants, sun, moon and stars, living creatures, and finally human beings. In the Gospel according to John, Jesus is called *the Word*.

*“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.”*  
~John 1:14

He is the perfect expression of God the Father’s love and power. Because of that love, the Word became flesh. Jesus came as one of us. He was born as a baby and grew into an adult. He experienced joy, sadness, hunger, thirst, and every other human emotion.

The saints tell us that by uniting with *the Word*, we will also be sons and daughters of God through *divine Filiation*. “For this is why the Word became man, and the Son of God became the Son of man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God” (CCC, 460).

Thereby, we share in Jesus’ life and mission. In its most proper sense, divine filiation refers to the relationship of the Second Person of the Trinity to the Father. “In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life” (CCC, 1).

Fulfilling the covenant established with his fallen children, God sent his only Son, for our salvation. As the Nicene Creed reminds us, Jesus came down from Heaven, and “by the power of the Holy Spirit became Incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and was made man” (*Roman Missal*).

Why did the Word become flesh? The *Catechism* list four reasons:

- *In order to save us by reconciling us with God.* Christ reconciled us with God, who because he loved us so much, sent his Son to pay for our sins (see CCC, 457).
- *So that we might know God’s love.* God sends his Son, so that we can live through him (see CCC, 458).
- *To be a model of holiness.* Jesus told us that no one comes to the Father, except through him. God directly tells the Apostles to listen to Jesus, and Jesus gives us the Beatitudes and a new law, “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (*John 15:12*).
- *To make us partakers of the divine nature.* Jesus, “wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods” (CCC, 460). Saint Peter’s put it this way:

*“Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world ... and may become participants of the divine nature.”*  
~2 Peter 1:4

The *Catechism* says, “We had lost the possession of the good” (CCC, 457). We needed Jesus to reconcile our sinful nature with God.

*“Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us the light; captives, we awaited a Savior; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator. Are these things minor or insignificant? Did they not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state?”*  
~CCC, 457

God’s love came to live among us in the form of Jesus, the Second Person of the Trinity, so that we could live through him. John tells us, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life: (*John 3:16*).

Pope Benedict XVI has written that being Christian does not happen from a simple choice. Instead it results from an encounter with an event – the person of Jesus Christ. This gives our lives a new, decisive direction. The new direction teaches us to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might as well as love neighbor as we love ourselves. “Since God has first loved us, love is now no longer a mere ‘command’; it is the response to the gift of love with which God draws near to us,” Pope Benedict XVI wrote.

## **Dignity of the Human Person**

The starting point of Christian morality is who we are, which is sons and daughters of God. We are people with inherent dignity, that is, each one of us is beloved of God, gifted with his grace, and made in his image and likeness (see CCC, 1700). We

are naturally religious beings, whose vocation is to know, love, and serve God. As children of God, we are called to live in communion with him and find our happiness through him.

Without asking his divine nature, Jesus took on our human nature so he could reveal the full extent of his Father's love for us. Jesus, who is both true God and true man, is our principal model of holiness, our mediator with God the Father, and our Savior. Jesus is our Lord and by our calling him "Lord", we profess our belief in his divinity. In his message and, more importantly, in his very life, Jesus reveals the scope and the depth of his Father's love for us. Only when we see ourselves through the eyes of Jesus do we truly see ourselves. In Jesus, we discover the beauty, the glory, and the dignity of who we are.

We have a spiritual and immortal soul, and intelligence that can reason the order of things as God created them, and a free will that allows us to direct our lives toward the good (see CCC, 1703 and 1704). Freedom is something that modern society values greatly. A high price has been paid by many to protect freedom or restore it. If our greatest longing is to be with our Creator, then we will naturally want to do what God's will is for us. To do that, we must be free. This kind of freedom is "an outstanding manifestation of the divine image" (see CCC, 1705). The Second Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes* speaks of freedom:

*"Their dignity therefore requires them to act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within, and not by their own blind impulses or by external constraint.* ~*Gaudium et Spes, Para. 17*

Our freedom is weakened through sin, and God's grace is necessary to imitate his eternal goodness. We have great hope because we were created by God to be eternally happy with him in Heaven. We know and trust that God will help and support us to do what is right and to void temptation and deliver us from evil. To do this, we must work to form a correct conscience, listen to it as God's voice written on our hearts, and act with love for God and for our neighbor. This is living the moral life, which "bear witness to the dignity of the person" (CCC, 1706).

From the beginning of time, people have been tempted to sin. This is evidenced in the account of Adam and Eve. Their sin of disobedience, which we know as *Original Sin*, inclines us toward evil. It destroyed the original harmony of creation and has left us with a divided nature. We struggle between good and evil. We abuse our freedom when we act apart from God. "People find that they are unable of themselves to overcome the assaults of evil ... so that everyone feels as if in chains," (*Gaudium et Spes, para. 13*). That is why Christ lived among us, to restore our freedom by cutting the bonds that sin places on us.

*"By his Passion, Christ delivered us from Satan and from sin. He merited for us the new life in the Holy Spirit. His grace restores what sin had damaged in us.* ~*CCC, 1708*

By living in Christ, we live as sons and daughters of God. In doing so, we follow Jesus' example and act in right and just ways. "In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness" (CCC, 1709). When we embrace the moral life out of faith, we come to see that our true treasures are found in Heaven. In doing so, we reject the empty promises of selfish desires. Our treasures in Heaven are eternal. At best, giving in to selfish desires means we will hunger for them again and again. At worst, selfishness creates more pain or even death.

## **Responding to God's Plan**

The moral life is not easy. We have to resist temptations and comfortable solutions to difficult problems. Our responses, however, should be governed by charity. Our deeds and words should be rooted in love for God – not in self-interest. In today's world, a world hungry for truth, we often label that hunger for truth a need for "transparency." We want to be able to see through what's being done to the underlying motives.

Saint Basil the Great, a third-century bishop, talked about the right reasons for what we do. After so many centuries, his words still get straight to the heart of the matter. "If we turn away from evil and out of fear of punishment, we are in the position of slaves," he said. But, if "we obey for the sake of the good itself and out of love for him who commands ... we are in the position of children" (CCC, 1828).

Leading a moral life transforms our relationship with God. No longer do we stand before God as a servant motivated by fear or as an employee trying to get in the boss' good graces. Leading a moral life means we become more and more a child of God responding to him out of love, and the reason is because God loved us into being.



## The Call to Joy

Jesus preached the *Beatitudes* – teachings meant to guide the moral attitudes and actions of those who wanted to follow him – during his *Sermon on the Mount*. The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus’ teaching. They fulfill the promises made to Abraham and the Chosen People (see CCC, 1716).

Jesus said these statements were keys to true happiness. They free us from the false values played on things in the world. They open us to what is truly good.

*“Indeed, when God comforts, he satisfied the hunger for righteousness, he wipes away the tears of those who mourn, which means that, as well as compensating each one in a practical way, he opens the Kingdom of Heaven.*

~Pope Benedict XVI, *Angelus*, January 2011

The Beatitudes contradicted the idea that wealth, success, and the easy life are the source of happiness. Jesus told his audience that those who are truly blessed and happy are those who are poor in spirit, or those who mourn, or those who are hungering and thirsting for righteousness for their neighbors. The Beatitudes bring joy to those who embrace them.

*“But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; ... God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing, things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.*

~1 Corinthians 1:27, 28-29

Jesus said we should rejoice when we experience suffering in his name.

*“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.”*

~Matthew 5:11-12a

### The Eight Beatitudes

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is Kingdom of Heaven.*
2. *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
3. *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
4. *Blessed are those who hungry and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
5. *Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*
6. *Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will be called children of God.*
7. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
8. *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

The beatitudes, like the Ten Commandments, both describe what it means to live as a member of God’s People. The Beatitudes teach us the *virtues*, or attitudes, that help us achieve our goals in life as Christians: building up God’s Kingdom, participating in the life of the Trinity, attaining happiness on Earth and in Heaven, and living as sons and daughters of God.

The beatitudes offer hope as they describe the types of blessings and rewards waiting for those who choose to live them. The Beatitudes challenge us to think conscientiously about our attitude toward others that our attitude reflects love of God above everything else.

Each of the Beatitudes presents us with life goals, as well as actions that flow from those goals. Use the following questions to determine how close you are to loving in the spirit of the Beatitudes. After reading the list, choose one set of questions, and reflect on how you might make these characteristics your own. How might you better follow in the footsteps of the Saints who lived by the Beatitudes?

*The Poor in Spirit.* How much do I trust in God? How much do I think I have to control everything in order to be successful and happy? How much do I accept help when I need it? How much room in my life do I make for my relationship with God? How often do I bring my needs to God? How often do I help those who are poor in spirit or finance?

*Those Who Mourn.* Life involves suffering. Do I accept times of sadness, pain, loss, and failure? Or do I complain and try to assign blame? How easy is it for me to feel the pain of others, and stand with them in difficult times?

*The Meek.* How humble am I? how often do I express gratitude for what others do for me, or for what I have? What kind of friend am I to those who are not in the most popular crowds? How much respect do I show to those who are never in the limelight?

*Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness.* How important is fairness, justice, equality, and righteousness to me? How willing am I to stand up for these things even if it comes with a cost?

*The Merciful.* Would people who know me say that I am truly a kind person? How often have I demonstrated mercy when I didn't have to or didn't want to? Am I someone who forgives easily or do I tend to hold grudges?

*The Pure in Heart.* to what extent am I a person of integrity and honesty? How often do I try to manipulate or use people? Do I mean what I say? How much would people say that I am good hearted?

*Peacemakers.* How often do I search for peaceful means to resolve conflicts? Am I known as a peacemaker in my family, among my friends? Do I try to understand the points of view of those with whom I have disagreements?

*Those Who Are Persecuted in the Cause of Righteousness.* How willing am I to stand up for my beliefs, even when they are unpopular or lead to personal hardships? What am I willing to stand up for?

Speaking in Toronto, on the shores of Lake Ontario, Pope Saint John Paul II described the Beatitudes as the *Magna Carta* of Christianity. Like those who listened anxiously to Jesus at the Sermon on the Mount, the young people gathered in Toronto for World Youth Day 2002 listened attentively to the Lord. "I have heard your festive voices, your cries, your songs, and I have felt the deep longing that beats within your hearts: you want to be happy!" the Pope told the crowd. The Pope ended his speech with a resounding prayer for the young people to help with God's plan for salvation:

*"Only Jesus is the only Master, only Jesus peaks the unchanging message that responds to the deepest longings of the human heart, because he alone knows "what is in each person" (cf. Jn 2:25). Today he calls you to be the salt and light of the world, to choose goodness, to live in justice, to become instruments of love and peace. His call has always demanded choice between good and evil, between light and darkness, between life and death. He makes the same invitation today to you who are gathered here on the shores of Lake Ontario.*

*"To believe in Jesus is to accept what he says, even when it runs contrary to what others are saying. It means rejecting the lure of sin, however attractive it may be, in order to set out on the difficult path of the Gospel virtues.*

*"Young people listening to me, answer the Lord with strong and generous hearts! He is counting on you. Never forget: Christ needs you to carry out his plan of salvation! Christ needs your youth and your generous enthusiasm to make his proclamation of joy resound ... Answer his call by placing your lives at his service in your brothers and sisters! Trust Christ, because he trusts you.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, proclaim once more your Beatitudes in the presence of these young people, gathered in Toronto for the World Youth Day. Look upon them with love and listen to their young hearts, ready to put their future on the line for you. You have called them to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Continue to teach them the truth and beauty of the vision that you proclaimed on the Mountain. Make them men and women of the Beatitudes! Let the like of your wisdom shine upon them, so that in word and deed they may spread in the world the light and the light and salt of the Gospel. Make their whole life a bright reflection of you, who are the true light that came into this world so that whoever believes in you will not die, but will have eternal life (cf. Jn 3:16).*

### **Heart of Jesus' Preaching**

Go has placed a desire for happiness in our hearts, and the Beatitudes help us respond to that natural longing (see CCC, 1718). We have this desire so that we will seek out God, who is the only one who can fulfill our happiness. Saint Augustine pointed out that every member of the human race wants to live happily.

*"Since in seeking you, my God, I seek a happy life, let me seek you so that my soul may live, for my body draws life from my soul and my soul draws life from you.*

~Saint Augustine

In fact, God calls us all, as individuals and as the Body of Christ as a whole, to his own beatitude or happiness. One way to describe beatitude is extreme blessedness. The New Testament gives us four ways to characterize this kind of happiness to which God calls us:

- The coming of the Kingdom of God: “From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (*Matthew 4:17*).
- The vision of God: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (*Matthew 5:8*).
- Entering into the joy of the Lord: “You have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master” (*Matthew 25:21b*).
- Entering into God’s rest: “Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (*Hebrews 4:7*) (*see CCC, 1720*).

For our part, we must grow in *faith* and moral life. Father Alfred McBride, O Praem., notes that while faith begins at our Baptism, it also demands that we increase our faith as we move through stages of development, “Unless this happens, faith remains stunted, even childish, and therefore easy to lose adult complexity is not matched with faith advancement,” he writes. This is what we are called to right now.

The Beatitudes encourage us to live lives grounded in Christian morality. “It invites us to purify our hearts of bad instincts and to seek the love of God above all else” (*CCC, 1723*). True happiness is found in God alone and is beyond our understanding or power. Saint Irenaeus talked about how God the “Father cannot be grasped, but because of God’s love and goodness toward us, and because he can do all things, he goes so far as to grant those who love him the privilege of seeing him ... For what is impossible for men is possible for God” (*CCC, 1722*).

There is no amount of wealth, fame, or technology that can bring us more happiness than God. We can’t find true happiness in all things, although they can be used in morally right ways to bring us closer to God. They can also be used in the wrong ways.

Wealth is something that humans have always given some instinctive honor, for centuries, many people have measured happiness by the amount of wealth a person can acquire. “Wealth is one idol of the day and notoriety is a second” (*CCC, 1723*). The Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and the teachings of the Apostles, however, give us paths that lead to the Kingdom of God. Step by step, in our daily behavior and decisions, we lead ourselves on those paths, sustained by the Holy Spirit. “By the working of the Word of Christ, we slowly bear fruit in the Church to the glory of God” (*CCC, 1724*).

The Beatitudes then help discern our choices about earthly things and shape our lives. “They purify our hearts in order to teach us to love God above all things” (*CCC, 1728*).

## Following Christ

Following Jesus is the form of *discipleship* takes commitment, come with a cost, and brings out the best in us – every one of us regardless of age, personality, or history.

Following Jesus begins with the baptismal grace we receive in the Sacrament of Baptism. Our initiation into the Body of Christ starts with Baptism. That includes forgiveness of Original Sin and all personal sins. We are born into new life and become adopted sons and daughters of God the “Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ” (*CCC, 1279*).

Catholics are familiar with Baptism as the gateway into the Church, and a necessary step for salvation. The Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are the process of initiation, somethings celebrated all at once as an adult or in stages beginning in infancy. The commitment called for in each Sacrament extends beyond the celebration. The commitment is just beginning. They set us on a oral path in life.

The white garment symbolizes putting on Christ through the graces of Baptism, this ritual indicates the lifelong commitment baptized people make. The graces of Baptism give us the power to live and act on the promptings of the Holy Spirit that guide our actions. This is how we can grow in goodness and moral virtues (*see CCC, 1266*).

Confirmation completes and strengthens the grace of Baptism. “By a special outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which seal or confirm the baptized in union with Christ and equip them for active participation in the worship and apostolic life of

the Church” (CCC, Glossary, p. 872). Often young people preparing for Confirmation perform a service to their community as a sign of their Christian commitment that continues.

Participation in the Eucharist continues our commitment as well, and it is “the heart and the summit of the Church’s life” (CCC, 1407). We join with Catholics worldwide to worship Jesus and give thanks to God the Father. We offer perfect worship to the Father because we are united with his Son, Jesus, in offering worship. We “dishonor [the] table” of the Eucharist if we do not move from participating in this meal to sharing with people in need (CCC, 1397).

The three-step process of imitation into the Body of Christ not only begins the journey of discipleship, it sustains the journey.

*“Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.*

*~Roman Missal, Concluding Rite*

### **His Story Is Our Story**

In the midst of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sums up his challenge to us in these words: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Perfection means to be *completely focused on* being the people God created us to be. Jesus fulfilled completely the purpose for which he was created. It took Jesus his whole human life to complete this task; just as it will for each of us. To help us on our journey, Jesus assures us that his story is our story. We celebrate our identification with Christ in our Baptism and Confirmation, in our participation in the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, and through all our efforts to live a Christ-like life.

Our first and last point is always Jesus Christ. “It is by looking to him in faith that Christ’s faithful can hope that he himself fulfills his promises in them” (CCC, 1698). By loving Christ in the same way that he loved us, we hope to act and decide in ways that live up to our dignity. Saint John Eudes put it this way:

*“I ask you to consider that our Lord Jesus Christ is your true head, and that you are one of his members. He belongs to you as the head belongs to its members; all that is his is yours; his spirit, his heart, his body and soul, and all his faculties. You must make use of all these as of your own, to serve, praise, love, and glorify God. You belong to him, as members belong to their head. And so he longs for you to use all that is in you, as if it were his own, for the service and glory of the Father. For to me, to love is Christ.*

*~CCC, 1698*

### **GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES**

The Church of the Beatitudes near Tabgha, Israel, overlooks the Sea of Galilee. The church memorializes the Sermon on the Mount. Built in a Byzantine style between 193 and 1938, it was erected near ruins of a fourth-century church. The hilltop church is simple but elegant with marble walls and a golden dome. Tour guides out that it has an octagonal base-eight sides to represent the eight Beatitudes given by Jesus.

The first-century pilgrims who heard the Beatitudes must have pondered these mysterious but compelling statements and discussed with one another how they could begin to live them. Two thousand years later, it’s the same for modern pilgrims. They leave the Church of the Beatitudes, travel down the mountain and head home thinking about how they must learn to be poor in spirit, meek, peacemakers. That journey, they realize, will be life-long

### **Parish Outreach**

- One of the best places to see the connection between the Sacraments and moral life is when parishes reach out to the community around them. People nourished by the Sacraments takes the message of Jesus to the larger society through acts of service, generosity, and kindness. Here are a few stories that demonstrate this.
- When people came to Indianapolis for Super Bowl XLVI, parishioners at historic St. John the Evangelist Church attracted people to the Gospel message with a zip line ride in front of the Church. At the bottom was a sign that read: “If you thought the zip line was a thrill, come in and spend some time with Jesus.”
- In New York City, a local priest started an outreach to immigrants from the nation of Ghana. With the help of parishioners, the priest began celebrating Mass on Tuesday nights and the group gathered afterward to socialize. Hundreds of people started attending.
- Following a mission trip to Mexico, parishioners from a Catholic church in Wisconsin chose to bring a teenage girl to their hometown so she could have surgery on a life-threatening tumor. Before the surgery, they prayed for her and the priest anointed her at Mass.

Sacraments Contain What They Signify
In Baptism, we die to ourselves and rise in the life of Christ.
In Confession, we deepen our commitment to a life in Christ.
In the Eucharist, we are united into the one Body of Christ.
In the Sacrament of Penance, we forgive and receive forgiveness in order to reunite the broken relationships of life.
In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, our bodies and our souls are healed.
In Holy Orders, we are called to service of the local and universal Church through ordained leadership.
In Marriage, the two become one flesh in service of the domestic Church – the family.

Catholic sacramental celebrations are connected with leading a moral life. The Sacraments contain the reality of our true Catholic identity – that is, through our sacramental celebration, we become those persons and that community we are meant to be. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we continue to live out the reality of our Catholic identity in our daily lives.

The Sacraments transform those believers who come to them with faith and sincerity. The tasks of discipleship and morality we never-ending, and the Sacraments give us the grace we need to live the moral life in Christ.

It is through those Sacraments and the power of the Holy Spirit that we participate in Jesus' Death and Resurrection. We die to sin and are reborn to new life in Christ. The Sacraments graft us as branches to the vine, which is Christ himself. We become members of the Body of Christ.

*“God gave himself to us through his Spirit. By the participation of the Spirit, we become communicants in the divine nature ... For this reason, those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinized.”* ~CCC, 1988

Jesus is our great moral teacher and model. In all of his teachings, Jesus begins with the message of God's love for us. We can explore Jesus' invitation to respond to God's love by living a life of love. Pope Saint John Paul II reminds us in *Virginitatis Splendor* that it is Christ the teacher, the Risen Lord who has life in himself and who is always present in his Church and in the world. “It is he who opens up to the faithful the book of Scriptures, and by fully revealing the Father's will, teaches the truth about moral action,” Saint John Paul II wrote.

If we want to thoroughly understand our purpose and our nature, we must draw near to Christ as the rich young man did. Eternal life with God awaits those who travel the path of morality and discipleship.

**\*\*answer questions on pages 23 - 25**

### **Part III: The Church of Mercy: by Pope Francis I**

#### **The Cult of the God of Money (General Audience, 5 June 2013)**

It is no longer that person who commands, but money, money, cash commands. And God our Father gave us the task of protecting the earth – not for money, but for ourselves, for men and women. We have this task! Nevertheless men and women are sacrificed to the idols of profit and consumption: it is the “culture of waste.” If a computer breaks, it is a tragedy; but poverty. And the needs and dramas of so many people, end up being considered normal. If on a winter's night – here on the Via Ottaviano, for example – someone dies, that is not news. If there are children in so many parts of the world who have nothing to eat, that is not news; it seems normal. It cannot be so! And yet these things enter into normality: that some homeless people should freeze to death on the street – this doesn't make news. On the contrary, when the stock market drops ten points in some cities, it constitutes a tragedy. Dome one who dies is not news, but lowering income by ten points is a tragedy! In this way people are thrown aside as if they were trash.

This “culture of waste” tends to become a common mentality that infects everyone. Human life, the person, is no longer seen as a primary value to be respected and safeguarded, especially if that person is poor or disabled or not yet useful, like the unborn child, or is no longer of any use, like the elderly person. This culture of waste has also made us insensitive to wasting and throwing out excess foodstuff, which is especially condemnable when, in every part of the world, unfortunately, many individuals and families suffer hunger and malnutrition. There was a time when our grandparents were very careful not to throw away any leftover food. Consumerism has us to be accustomed to excess and the daily waste of food, whose value, which goes far beyond mere financial parameters, we are no longer able to judge correctly. Let us remember well, however, that when ever food is thrown out, it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor, from the hungry! I ask everyone to

reflect on the problem of the loss and waste of food, to identify was and approaches that, by seriously dealing with this problem, convey solidarity and sharing with the underprivileged.

**\*\*answer question on page 26**

**Part I: The Church Celebrates**

**Directions:** Match the term or name in the first column with the phrase in the second column that fits it best.

**Column 1**

1. Eastern Catholic Churches
2. Paschal Mystery
3. Invocation
4. Sacramental
5. Liturgy
6. Ascension
7. Signs of creation
8. Maronite Rite
9. Liturgy of the Word
10. Worship

**Column 2**

- a. recollect in the Triduum
- b. everyday objects that take on religious significance
- c. honor and praise for God
- d. are in union with Rome
- e. Jesus' last action on earth
- ab. calling on God at Mass
- ac. Scripture included in most Sacrament rituals
- ad. begun in Antioch by a saint
- ae. literally "the work of the people"
- bc. water, bread, oil, wine

**Directions:** write the letter of the correct answer on the space provided on the answer sheet.

11. A rite is said to be "in union with Rome" when it
  - a. Can trace its authority to the Ascension.
  - b. Participated in the Great Schism.
  - c. Accepts the authority of the Pope.
  - d. Uses the same rituals as the Latin Rite.
  
12. The Eastern (Great) Schism describes the break between
  - a. The Orthodox Church and the Maronite Rite
  - b. The Latin Rite and the Orthodox Church
  - c. The Ukrainian and the Eastern Rite
  - d. The Roman Rite and the Maronite Rite
  
13. Which Saint describes the worship of the early Christians?
  - a. Saint Justin Martyr
  - b. Saint Charbel
  - c. Saint Gregory Nazianzus
  - d. Saint Maron
  
14. The Greek Saint is one of the patrons of Europe
  - a. Saint Elias
  - b. Saint Basil the Great
  - c. Saint Cyril
  - d. Saint Methodius
  
15. The Eastern Catholic term for the Mass is
  - a. The Divine Liturgy.
  - b. Matins.
  - c. Liturgy of the Word.
  - d. Compline.
  
16. The Eastern Catholic Churches refer to Sacraments as
  - a. lauds.
  - b. mysteries.
  - c. rituals.
  - d. vespers.
  
17. Which current practice has its roots in Jewish Sabbath celebration?
  - a. Holy days of obligations
  - b. The sanctoral cycle
  - c. Having Sunday as the Lord's Day
  - d. The forms of prayer
  
18. Through these, we carry on Christ's work of healing and forgiveness.
  - a. Only the Sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the sick
  - b. The signs of creation
  - c. Jesus' life and teachings
  - d. The Sacraments themselves

c.





36. People are inclined toward evil because of
- a. Original Sin.
  - b. free will.
  - c. God's neglect.
  - d. human dignity.
37. A person who has a mature conscience will
- a. Feel like a slave to sin.
  - b. doubt his or her ability to choose.
  - c. make correct moral choice.
  - d. assume that anything attractive is a sin.
38. God gave us free will in order to
- a. confuse our thinking.
  - b. permit us to choose his way.
  - c. assure that we would sin.
  - d. invite evil into the world.
39. The first promise of the Messiah is known as the
- a. Word.
  - b. New Testament.
  - c. Creation Story.
  - d. Protoevangelium.
40. At the World Youth Day 2002, Pope Saint John Paul II called these the *Magna carta* of Christianity?
- a. Gospels
  - b. Beatitudes
  - c. Catechumenate
  - d. Precepts

