

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

A response to the Synodal Journey

This is a new initiative in response to your request to learn more about the teachings of the Catholic Church from the outcome of the Synodal Journey done recently. Each week an excerpt from the Catechism is selected along with a simple explanation. Copies are available at the back of Our Lady Star of the Sea RC Church, Ilfracombe.

If you would like to further explore the teachings of our faith there are several groups across the diocese that meet locally and online.

If you would like more information, please contact:

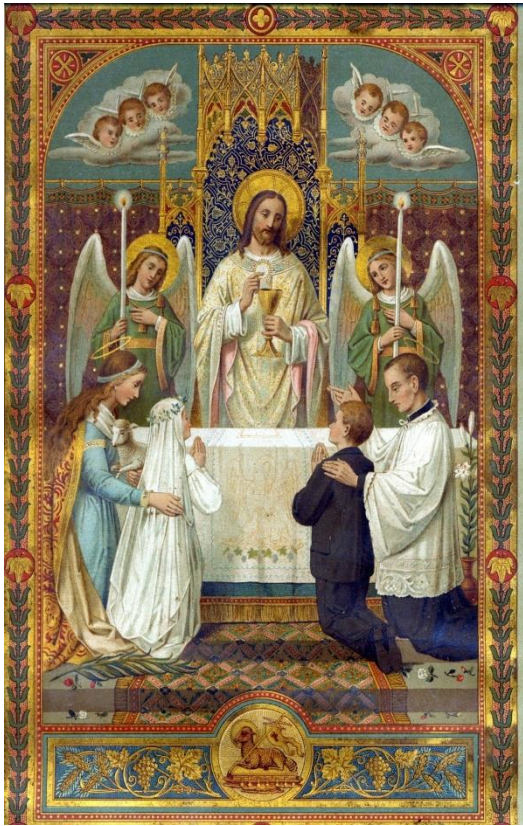
deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk

It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk Department of Evangelisation and Catechesis.

From Week 18

Week 18

From the Compendium of the Catechism: 177 – 179; 185 – 188



Who are the faithful?

The Christian faithful are those who, joined into Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church. There exists a true equality among them in their dignity as children of God.

How are the people of God formed?

Among the faithful by divine institution there exist sacred ministers who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders and who form the hierarchy of the Church. The other members of the Church are called the laity. In both the hierarchy and the laity there are certain of the faithful who are consecrated in a special manner to God by the profession of the evangelical counsels: chastity or celibacy, poverty and obedience.

Why did Christ institute a hierarchy in the Church?

Christ instituted an ecclesiastical hierarchy (hierarchy of priests) with the mission of feeding the people of God in His Name and for this purpose gave it authority. The hierarchy is formed of sacred ministers: bishops, priests and deacons. Thanks to the Sacrament of Orders, bishops and priests act in the exercise of their ministry in the name and person of Christ the Head. Deacons minister to the people of God in the *diakonia* (service) of word, liturgy and charity.

What is the mission of the pope?

The Pope, bishop of Rome and the successor of St Peter, is the perpetual, visible source and foundation of the unity of the Church. He is the vicar of Christ, the head of the college of bishops and pastor of the universal Church over which he has by divine institution full, supreme, immediate and universal power.

How do the bishops fit into this hierarchy?

The College of bishops in union with the Pope and never without him, also exercises supreme and full authority over the Church. They have the duty of proclaiming the Gospel faithfully and authoritatively to all. Bishops sanctify the Church by dispensing the grace of Christ by their ministry of the word and the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, and also by their prayers, their example and their work. Every bishop bears the care for all particular Churches and for the entire Church, along with all the other bishops who are united to the Pope.

When is the infallibility of the magisterium exercised?

Infallibility is exercised when the Roman Pontiff (the Pope), in virtue of his office as the Supreme Pastor of the Church, or the college of bishops, in union with the Pope especially when joined together in an Ecumenical Council, proclaim by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals.

Infallibility is also exercised when the Pope and bishops in their ordinary Magisterium (teaching office) are in agreement in proposing a doctrine as definitive. Adherence to such teaching requires the obedience of faith in every one of the faithful.

What is the vocation of the lay faithful?

The lay faithful have as their own vocation to seek the Kingdom of God by illuminating and ordering temporal affairs according to the plan of God. They carry out in this way their call to holiness and to the apostolate, a call given to all the baptised.

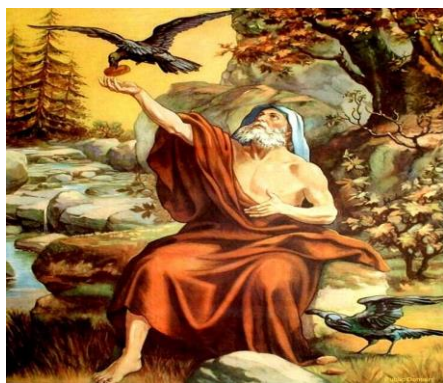


Week 19

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs 189 – 196

How do the lay faithful participate in the *priestly* office of Christ?

Priests of the Old Testament offered up sacrifices on behalf of the people. The lay faithful participate in this office especially in the Eucharist by offering as a spiritual sacrifice “acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5) their own lives with all of their works, their prayers, their apostolic undertakings, their family life, their daily work and hardships born with patience and even their consolations of spirit and body. In this way, the laity, dedicated to Christ and consecrated by the Holy Spirit, offer to God the world itself.



How do the laity participate in the *prophetic* office?

Prophets listen for the Truth of God and proclaim it to others. The laity participate in it by welcoming more and more in faith the Word of Christ and proclaiming it to the world by the witness of their lives, their words, their evangelising action, and by catechesis. This evangelising action acquires a particular efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world.

How do they participate in the *kingly* office?

Kings are leaders who act to defend and lead their people.

The laity participate in the kingly function of Christ because they have received from Him the power to overcome sin in themselves and in the world by self-denial and the holiness of their lives. They exercise various ministries at the service of the community and they imbue temporal activities and the institutions of society with moral values.

What is the consecrated life and what does it give to the mission of the church?

The consecrated life is a state of life recognised by the Church. It is a free response to a special call from Christ by which those consecrated give themselves completely to God and strive for the perfection of charity moved by the Holy Spirit. This consecration is characterised by the practice of the evangelical counsels. It participates in the mission of the Church by means of a complete dedication to Christ and to one's brothers and sisters witnessing to the hope of the heavenly Kingdom.

What is the meaning of the “communion of saints”?

This expression indicates first the common sharing of all the members of the Church in holy things (sancta): the faith, the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, the charisms, and the other spiritual gifts. At the root of this communion is love which “does not seek its own interests” (1 Corinthians 13:5) but leads the faithful to “hold everything in common” (Acts 4:32), even to put one's own material goods at the service of the most poor.

What else does “the communion of saints” mean?

This expression also refers to the communion between holy persons (sancti); that is, between those who by grace are united to the dead and risen Christ. Some are pilgrims on the earth; others, having passed from this life, are undergoing purification and are helped also by our prayers. Others already enjoy the glory of God and intercede for us. All of these together form in Christ one family, the Church, to the praise and glory of the Trinity.

In what sense is the Blessed virgin Mary the Mother of the Church?

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of the Church in the order of grace because she gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God, the Head of the body which is the Church. When He was dying on the cross, Jesus gave His mother to His disciple with the words, “Behold your mother” (John 19:27).



Image by AJ Jaanko from pixabay.com

Week 20

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 197 – 204



How does the Virgin Mary help the Church?

After the Ascension of her Son, the Virgin Mary aided the beginnings of the Church with her prayers. Even after her Assumption into heaven, she continues to intercede for her children, to be a model of faith and charity for all, and to exercise over them a salutary influence deriving from the superabundant merits of Christ. The faithful see in Mary an image and an anticipation of the resurrection that awaits them and they invoke her as advocate, helper, benefactress and mediatrix.

What kind of devotion is directed to the Holy Virgin?

It is a singular kind of devotion which differs essentially from the cult of adoration given only to the Most Holy Trinity. This special veneration directed to Mary finds particular expression in the liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and in Marian prayers such as the holy Rosary which is a compendium of the whole Gospel.

In what way is the Blessed Virgin Mary the eschatological icon of the Church?

Looking upon Mary, who is completely holy and already glorified in body and soul, the Church contemplates in her what she herself is called to be on earth and what she will be in the homeland of heaven.

“I BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS”

How are sins remitted?

The first and chief sacrament for the forgiveness of sins is Baptism. For those sins committed after Baptism, Christ instituted the sacrament of Reconciliation or Penance through which a baptised person is reconciled with God and with the Church.

Why does the Church have the power to forgive sins ?

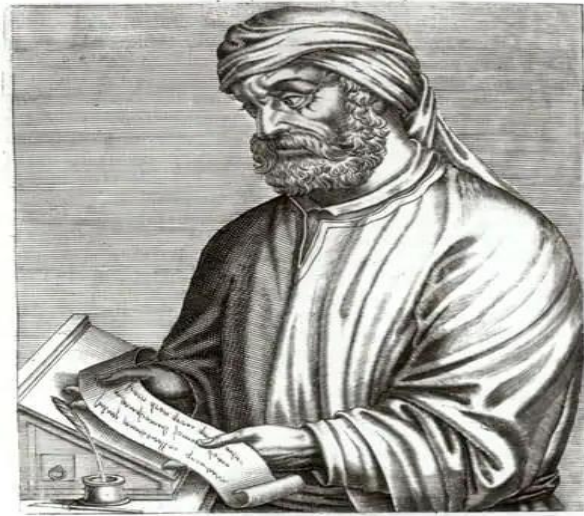
The Church has the mission and the power to forgive sins because Christ himself has conferred it upon her: “Receive the Holy Spirit, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:22-23).

“I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY”

What is the meaning of the term “body” (or “flesh”) and what importance does it have ?

The resurrection of the flesh is the literal formulation in the Apostles’ Creed for the resurrection of the body. The term “flesh” refers to humanity in its state of weakness and mortality. We believe in God the Creator of the flesh; we believe in the Word made flesh in order to redeem flesh; and we believe in the resurrection of flesh which is the fulfilment of both the creation and the redemption of the flesh.

**“There is not a soul that can at all procure salvation, except it believe while it is in the flesh, so true is it that the flesh is the very condition on which salvation hinges”
(Tertullian).**



What is meant by the “resurrection of the body”?

This means that the definitive state of man will not be one in which his spiritual soul is separated from his body. Even our mortal bodies will one day come to life again.

What is the relationship between the resurrection of Christ and our resurrection?

Just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and now lives forever, so he himself will raise everyone on the last day with an incorruptible body: “Those who have done good will rise to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:29).

Week 21

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 205 - 211

What happens to our body and our soul after death?

After death, which is the separation of the body and the soul, the body becomes corrupt while the soul, which is immortal, goes to meet the judgment of God and awaits its reunion with the body when it will rise transformed at the time of the return of the Lord. How the resurrection of the body will come about exceeds the possibilities of our imagination and understanding.

What does it mean to die in Christ Jesus?

Dying in Christ Jesus means to die in the state of God’s grace without any mortal sin. A believer in Christ, following His example, is thus able to transform his or her own death into an act of obedience and love for the Father. “This saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him” (2 Timothy 2:11).

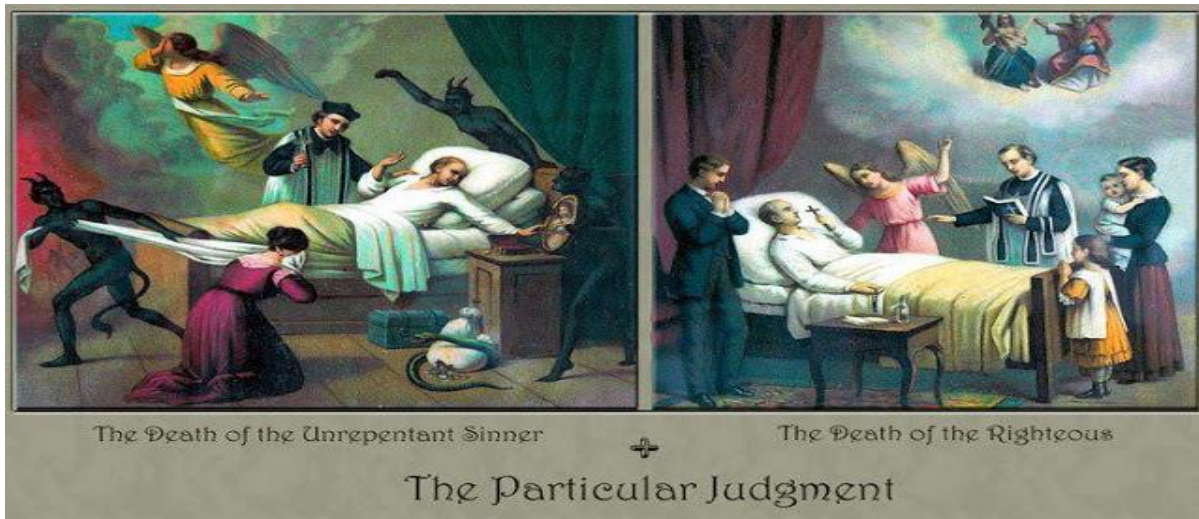
I believe in life everlasting.

What is life everlasting?

Eternal life is that life which begins immediately after death. It will have no end. It will be preceded for each person by a particular judgment at the hands of Christ who is the Judge of the living and the dead. This particular judgment will be confirmed in the final judgment.

What is the particular judgment?

It is the judgment of immediate retribution which each one after death will receive from God in his immortal soul in accord with his faith and his works. This retribution consists in entrance into the happiness of heaven, immediately or after an appropriate purification, or entry into the eternal damnation of hell.



What is meant by the term “heaven”?

By “heaven” is meant the state of supreme and definitive happiness. Those who die in the grace of God and have no need of further purification are gathered around Jesus and Mary, the angels and the saints. They thus form the Church of heaven, where they see God “face-to-face” (1 Corinthians 13:12). They live in a communion of love with the Most Blessed Trinity and they intercede for us.



“True and subsistent life consists in this: the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit, pouring out His heavenly gifts on all things without exception. Thanks to His Mercy, we too, men that we are, have received the inalienable promise of eternal life.” Saint Cyril of Jerusalem

What is purgatory?

Purgatory is the state of those who die in God's friendship, assured of their eternal salvation, but who still have need of purification to enter into the happiness of heaven.

How can we help the souls being purified in purgatory?

Because of the communion of saints, the faithful who are still pilgrims on earth are able to help the souls in purgatory by offering prayers in suffrage (intercession, pleading, on their behalf) for them, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice (the Mass). They also help them by almsgiving, indulgences and works of penance.

Week 22

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 212 – 218

In what does hell consist?

Hell consists in the eternal damnation of those who die in mortal sin through their own free choice. The principal suffering of hell is eternal separation from God in whom alone we can have the life and happiness for which we were created and for which we long. Christ proclaimed this reality with the words, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire" (Matthew 25:41) (see catechism nos 1033-1035, 1056-1057)

How can one reconcile the existence of hell with the infinite goodness of God?

God, while desiring "all come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), nevertheless has created the human person to be free and responsible; and he respects our decisions. Therefore, it is the human person who freely excludes himself from communion with God if at the moment of death he persists in mortal sin and refuses the merciful love of God.

In what does the final judgment consist?

The final or universal judgment consists in a sentence of happiness or eternal condemnation, which the Lord Jesus will issue in regard to the "just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15) when he returns as the Judge of the living and the dead. After the last judgment, the resurrected body will share in the retribution which the soul received at the particular judgment.

When will this judgement occur?

This judgment will come at the end of the world and only God knows the day and the hour.

The Last Judgment by Viktor Vasnetsov



What is the hope of the new heavens and the new earth?

After the final judgment the universe itself, freed from its bondage to decay, will share in the glory of Christ with the beginning of “the new heavens” and a “new earth” (2 Peter 3:13).

Thus, the fullness of the Kingdom of God will come about, that is to say, the definitive realization of the salvific plan of God to “unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth” (Ephesians 1:10). God will then be “all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:18) in eternal life.

What is the meaning of the word “Amen” with which we conclude our profession of faith?

The Hebrew word “Amen”, which also concludes the last book of Sacred Scripture, some of the prayers of the New Testament, and the liturgical prayers of the Church, expresses our confident and total “yes” to what we professed in the Creed, entrusting ourselves completely to him who is the definitive “Amen” (Revelation 3:14), Christ the Lord.

The Sacramental Economy

What is the liturgy?

The liturgy is the celebration of the mystery of Christ and in particular his paschal mystery.

Through the exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ the liturgy manifests in signs and brings about the sanctification of humankind.

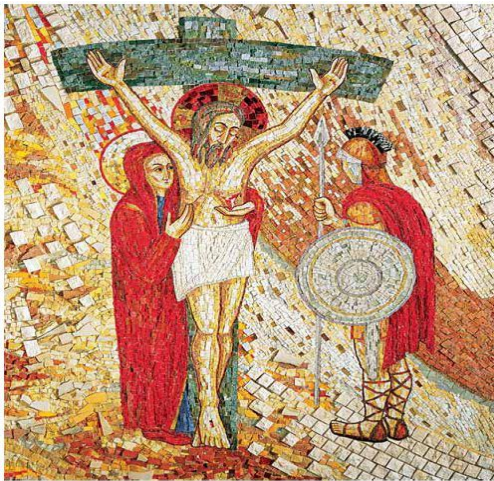
The public worship which is due to God is offered by the Mystical Body of Christ, that is, by its head and by its members.



This genre of painting evidences the great reverence of the Church for the Eucharist through the centuries.

Week 23

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 219 – 227



In this image, Mary, who is a figure for the Church, gathers in her left hand the blood and water which flow from the open side of Christ and which are symbols of the Church's sacraments.

What place does the liturgy occupy in the life of the church?

The liturgy as the sacred action par excellence is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed and it is likewise the font from which all her power flows. Through the liturgy Christ continues the work of our redemption in, with and through his Church.

In what does the Sacramental Economy consist?

The sacramental economy consists in the communication of the fruits of Christ's redemption through the celebration of the sacraments of the Church, most especially that of the Eucharist, "until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

THE LITURGY – WORK OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

In what way is the Father the source and the goal of the liturgy?

Through the liturgy the Father fills us with his blessings in the Word made flesh who died and rose for us and pours into our hearts the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the Church blesses the Father by her worship, praise and thanksgiving and begs Him for the gift of His Son and the Holy Spirit.

What is the work of Christ in the liturgy?

In the liturgy of the Church, it is his own paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. By giving the Holy Spirit to His apostles, He entrusted to them and their successors the power to make present the work of salvation through the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments, in which He Himself acts to communicate His grace to the faithful of all times and places throughout the world.

How does the Holy Spirit work in the liturgy of the Church?

The very closest cooperation is at work in the liturgy between the Holy Spirit and the Church. The Holy Spirit prepares the Church to encounter her Lord. He recalls and manifests Christ to the faith of the assembly. He makes the mystery of Christ really present. He unites the Church to the life and mission of Christ and makes the gift of communion bear fruit in the Church.

The paschal mystery in the sacraments of the church

What are the sacraments and which are they?

The sacraments, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, are efficacious signs of grace perceptible to the senses. Through them divine life is bestowed upon us. There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

What is the relationship of the sacraments to Christ?

The Mysteries of Christ's life are the foundations of what he would henceforth dispense in the sacraments, through the ministers of His Church.



"What was visible in our Saviour
has passed over into his mysteries."

St Leo the Great.

What is the link between the sacraments and the church?

Christ has entrusted the sacraments to his Church. They are the sacraments "of the Church" in a twofold sense: they are "from her" in so far as they are actions of the Church which is the sacrament of Christ's action; and they are "for her" in as much as they build up the Church.

What is the sacramental character?

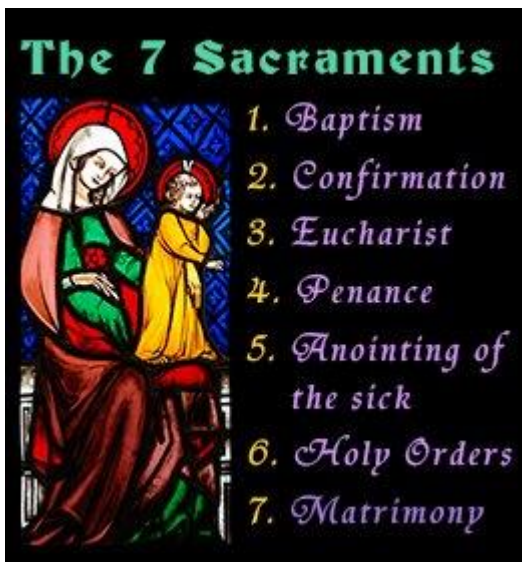
It is a spiritual "seal" bestowed by the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. It is a promise and guarantee of divine protection.

By virtue of this seal the Christian is configured to Christ, participates in a variety of ways in His priesthood and takes his part in the Church according to different states and functions. He is, therefore, set apart for divine worship and the service of the Church.

Because this character is indelible the sacraments that impress it on the soul are received only once in life.

Week 24

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 228 – 235



What is the relationship between the sacraments and faith?

The sacraments not only presuppose faith but with words and ritual elements they nourish, strengthen and express it. By celebrating the sacraments, the Church professes the faith that comes from the apostles. This explains the origin of the ancient saying, "*lex orandi, lex credenda*" that is, the Church believes as she prays.

Why are the sacraments efficacious?

The sacraments are efficacious by the very fact that the sacramental action is performed ("*ex opera operato*") because it is Christ who acts in the sacraments and communicates their grace. The sacraments are NOT wrought by the righteousness of either the minister or the recipient but by God. However, the disposition of the one who receives the sacraments affects the *fruits* of the sacraments in that person.

For what reason are the sacraments necessary for salvation?

For believers in Christ, the sacraments, even if they are not all given to each of the faithful, are necessary for salvation because they confer sacramental grace, forgiveness of sins, adoption as children of God, conformation to Christ the Lord and membership in the Church. The Holy Spirit heals and transforms those who receive the sacraments.

What is sacramental grace?

Sacramental grace is the grace of the Holy Spirit which is given by Christ and is proper to each sacrament. This grace helps the faithful in their journey toward holiness and so assists the Church to grow in charity and in her witness to the world.

What is the relationship between the sacraments and everlasting life?

In the sacraments the Church already receives a foretaste of eternal life, while “awaiting in blessed hope, the appearing in glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus” (Titus 2:13).

SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATION OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

Who acts in the liturgy?

In the liturgy it is the whole Christ (Christus Totus) who acts, Head and Body. As our High Priest he celebrates with His Body which is the Church in heaven and on earth.

Who celebrates the heavenly liturgy?

The heavenly liturgy is celebrated by the angels, by the saints of the Old and New Testaments, particularly the Mother of God, by the Apostles, by the martyrs, and by the great “multitude which no one could number from every nation, race, people and tongue” (Revelation 7:9). When we celebrate the mystery of our salvation in the sacraments we participate in this eternal liturgy.

How does the Church on earth celebrate the liturgy?

The Church on earth celebrates the liturgy as a priestly people in which each one acts according to his proper function in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The baptised offer themselves in a spiritual sacrifice; the ordained ministers celebrate according to the Order they received for the service of all the members of the Church; the bishops and priests act in the Person of Christ the Head.



Week 25

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 236 – 243

How is the liturgy celebrated?

The celebration of the liturgy is interwoven with signs and symbols whose meaning is rooted in creation and in human culture. It is determined by the events of the Old Testament and is fully revealed in the Person and work of Christ.

From where do the sacramental signs come?

Some come from created things (light, water, fire, bread, wine, oil); others come from social life (washing, anointing, breaking of bread). Still others come from the history of salvation in the Old Covenant (the Passover rites, the sacrifices, the laying on of hands, the consecrations).

These signs, some of which are normative and unchangeable, were taken up by Christ and are made the bearers of his saving and sanctifying action.

What is the link between the actions and the words in the celebration of the sacraments?

Actions and words are very closely linked in the celebration of the sacraments. Indeed, even if the symbolic actions are already in themselves a language, it is necessary that the words of the rite accompany and give life to these actions. The liturgical words and actions are inseparable both insofar as they are meaningful signs and insofar as they bring about what they signify.

What are the criteria for the proper use of singing and music in liturgical celebrations?

Since song and music are closely connected with liturgical action they must respect the following criteria. They should conform to Catholic doctrine in their texts, drawn preferably from Sacred Scripture and liturgical sources. They should be a beautiful expression of prayer. The music should be of a high quality. Song and music should encourage

the participation of the liturgical assembly. They should express the cultural richness of the People of God and the sacred and solemn character of the celebration.

What is the purpose of holy images?

The image of Christ is the liturgical icon par excellence.

Other images, representations of our Lady and of the Saints, signify Christ who is glorified in them.

They proclaim the same Gospel message that Sacred Scripture communicates by the word and they help to awaken and nourish the faith of believers.



He who sings prays twice,
said St Augustine of Hippo.



What is the centre of the liturgical season?

The centre of the liturgical season is Sunday which is the foundation and kernel of the entire liturgical year and has its culmination in the annual celebration of Easter, the feast of feasts.

What is the function of the liturgical year?

In the liturgical year the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ from his Incarnation to His return in glory.

On set days the Church venerates with special love the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. The Church also keeps the memorials of saints who lived for Christ, who suffered with Him, and who live with Him in glory.

What is the Liturgy of the Hours?

The Liturgy of the Hours, which is the public and common prayer of the Church, is the prayer of Christ with His body, the Church. Through the Liturgy of the Hours the mystery of Christ, which we celebrate in the Eucharist, sanctifies and transforms the whole of each day. It is composed mainly of psalms, other biblical text and readings from the Fathers and spiritual masters.

Week 26

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 243 – 252

Does the Church need places in order to celebrate the liturgy?

The worship “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24) of the New Covenant is not tied exclusively to any place because Christ is the true temple of God. Through Him Christians and the whole Church becomes temples of the living God by the action of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, the people of God in their earthly condition need places in which the community can gather to celebrate the liturgy.

What are sacred buildings?

They are the houses of God, a symbol of the Church that lives in that place as well as of the heavenly Jerusalem. Above all they are places of prayer in which the church celebrates the Eucharist and worships Christ who is truly present in the tabernacle.

What are the privileged places inside sacred buildings?

They are:

the altar, the tabernacle,
other holy oils are kept,
chair of the priest, the ambo,
confessional.



the place where the sacred Chrism and
the chair of the bishop (cathedra) or the
the baptismal font, and the

Why is the one Mystery of Christ celebrated by the Church according to various liturgical traditions?

The answer is that the unfathomable richness of the mystery of Christ cannot be exhausted by any single liturgical tradition. From the very beginning, therefore, this

richness found expression among various peoples and cultures in ways that are characterised by a wonderful diversity and complementarity.

What is the criterion that assures unity in the midst of plurality?

It is fidelity to the Apostolic Tradition, that is, the communion in the faith and in the sacraments received from the Apostles, a communion that is both signified and guaranteed by apostolic succession. The Church is Catholic and therefore can integrate into her unity all the authentic riches of cultures.

Is everything set and immutable in the liturgy?

In the liturgy, particularly in that of the sacraments, there are unchangeable elements because they are of divine institution. The Church is the faithful guardian of them. There are also, however, elements subject to change which the Church has the power and on occasion also the duty to adapt to the cultures of diverse peoples.

How are the sacraments of the Church divided?

There are: sacraments of *initiation*: baptism, confirmation and Holy Eucharist; sacraments of *healing*: Penance and Anointing of the sick; and the sacraments at the *service* of communion and mission: Holy Orders and Matrimony. The sacraments touch all the important moments of Christian life. All of the sacraments are ordered to the Holy Eucharist “as to their end” (Saint Thomas Aquinas).

Sacraments of Christian initiation

How is Christian initiation brought about?

Christian initiation is accomplished by means of the sacraments which establish the *foundations* of Christian life. The faithful born anew by Baptism are strengthened by Confirmation and are then nourished by the Eucharist.

What names are given to the first sacrament of initiation?

This sacrament is primarily called Baptism because of the central rite with which it is celebrated. To baptise means to “immerse” in water. The one who is baptised is immersed into the death of Christ and rises with Him as a “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17). This sacrament is also called the “bath of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5); and it is called “enlightenment” because the baptised becomes “a son of light” (Ephesians 5:8).



Week 27

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 252 – 263

How is Baptism pre-figured in the Old Covenant?



In the Old Covenant Baptism was pre-figured in various ways: water, seen as a source of life and of death; in the ark of Noah, which saved by means of water; in the passing through the Red Sea, which liberated Israel from Egyptian slavery; in the crossing of the Jordan River, that brought Israel into the promised land which is the image of eternal life.

Who brought to fulfilment those pre-figurations?

All the Old Covenant pre-figurations find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. At the beginning of His public life Jesus had himself baptised by John the Baptists in the Jordan. On the cross, blood and water, signs of Baptism and the Eucharist, flowed from His pierced side. After His Resurrection He gave to His apostles this mission: “Go forth and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

Starting when and to whom has the Church administered Baptism?

From the day of Pentecost, the Church has administered Baptism to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

In what does the essential rite of Baptism consist?

The essential rite of this sacrament consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water over his or her head while invoking the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Who can receive Baptism?

Every person not yet baptised is able to receive Baptism.

Why does the Church baptise infants?

The Church baptises infants because they are born with original sin. They need to be freed from the power of the Evil One and brought into that realm of freedom which belongs to the children of God.

What is required of one who is to be baptised?

Everyone who is to be baptised is required to make a profession of faith. This is done personally in the case of an adult or by the parents and by the Church in the case of infants. Also the godfather or the god-mother and the whole ecclesial community share the responsibility for baptismal preparation (catechumenate) as well as for the development and safeguarding of the faith and grace given at baptism.

Who can baptise?

The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and the priest. In the Latin Church the deacon also can baptise. In case of necessity any person can baptise provided he has the intention of doing what the Church does. This is done by pouring water on the head of the candidate while saying the Trinitarian formula for Baptism: "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

Is Baptism necessary for salvation?

Baptism is necessary for salvation for all those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament.

Is it possible to be saved without Baptism?

Since Christ died for the salvation of all, those can be saved without Baptism who die for the faith (*baptism of blood*). Catechumens and all those who, even without knowing Christ and the Church, still (under the impulse of grace) sincerely seek God and strive to do His will can also be saved without Baptism (*Baptism of desire*). The Church in her liturgy entrusts children who die without Baptism to the Mercy of God.

What are the effects of Baptism?

Baptism takes away original sin, all personal sins and all punishment due to sin. It makes the baptised person a participant in the divine life of the Trinity through sanctifying grace the grace of justification which incorporates one into Christ and into His Church. It gives one a share in the priesthood of Christ and provides the basis for communion with all Christians. It bestows the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. A baptised person belongs forever to Christ. He is marked with the indelible seal of Christ (character).

Week 28

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 264 – 270

What is the meaning of the Christian name received at Baptism?

The name is important because God knows each of us by name, that is, in our uniqueness as persons. In Baptism a Christian receives his or her own name in the Church. It should preferably be the name of a saint who might offer the baptised a model of sanctity and an assurance of his or her intercession before God.



What place does Confirmation have in the Divine plan of salvation?

In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the awaited Messiah and on the entire messianic people. The whole life and mission of Jesus were carried out in total communion with the Holy Spirit. The

Apostles received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and proclaimed “the great works of God” (Acts 2:11). They gave the gift of the same Spirit to the newly baptised by the laying on of hands. Down through the centuries, the Church has continued to live by the Spirit and to impart Him to her children.

Why is this sacrament called Chrismation or Confirmation?

It is called Chrismation (in the Eastern Churches: Anointing with holy Myron or Chrism) because the essential rite of the sacrament is anointing with Chrism. It is called Confirmation because it confirms and strengthens baptismal grace.

What is the essential rite of Confirmation?

The essential rite of Confirmation is the anointing with Sacred Chrism (oil mixed with balsam and consecrated by the bishop), which is done by the laying on of the hand of the minister who pronounces the sacramental words proper to the rite. In the West this anointing is done on the forehead of the baptised with the words, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit”. In the Eastern Churches of the Byzantine rite this anointing is also done on other parts of the body with the words, “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit”.

What is the effect of Confirmation?

The effect of Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit like that of Pentecost. This outpouring impresses on the soul an indelible character and produces a growth in the grace of Baptism. It roots the recipient more deeply in Divine sonship, binding him more firmly to Christ and to the Church and reinvigorates the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his soul. It gives a special strength to witness to the Christian faith.

Who can receive this sacrament?

Only those already baptised can and should receive this sacrament which can be received only once. To receive Confirmation efficaciously the candidate must be in a state of grace.

Who is the minister of Confirmation?

The original minister of Confirmation is the bishop. In this way the link between the confirmed and the Church in her apostolic dimension is made manifest. When a priest confers this sacrament, as ordinarily happens in the East and in special cases in the West, the link with the bishop and with the Church is expressed by the priest who is the collaborator of the bishop and by the Sacred Chrism, consecrated by the Bishop himself.



Week 29

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 271 – 278

What is the Eucharist?

The Eucharist is the very sacrifice of the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus which He instituted to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until His return in glory. Thus He entrusted to His Church this memorial of His death and Resurrection. It is a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet, in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.



When did Jesus Christ institute the Eucharist?

Jesus instituted the Eucharist on Holy Thursday “the night on which He was betrayed” (1 Corinthians 11:23), as He celebrated the Last Supper with His apostles.

How did He institute the Eucharist?

After He had gathered with His apostles in the Cenacle, Jesus took bread in His hands. He broke it and gave it to them saying, “Take this and eat it, all of you; this is my Body which will be given up for you”. Then He took the cup of wine in His hands and said, “Take this and drink of this, all of you. This is the cup of my Blood, the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.”

What does the Eucharist represent in the life of the Church?

It is the source and summit of all Christian life. In the Eucharist, the sanctifying action of God in our regard and our worship of Him reach their high point. It contains the whole spiritual good of the Church, Christ Himself, our Pasch (Pasch means Easter and therefore Resurrection). Communion with Divine life and the unity of the People of God are both expressed and effected by the Eucharist. Through the Eucharistic celebration we are united already with the liturgy of heaven and we have a foretaste of eternal life.

What are the names for this sacrament?

The unfathomable richness of this sacrament is expressed in different names which evoke its various aspects. The most common names are: the Eucharist, Holy Mass, the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of the Bread, the Eucharistic Celebration, the Memorial of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord, the Holy Sacrifice, the Holy and Divine Liturgy, the Sacred Mysteries, the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and Holy Communion.

Where does the Eucharist fit in the Divine plan of salvation?

The Eucharist was foreshadowed in the Old Covenant above all in the annual Passover meal celebrated every year by the Jews with unleavened bread to commemorate their hasty, liberating departure from Egypt. Jesus foretold it in His teaching and He instituted it when

He celebrated the Last Supper with His apostles in a Passover meal. The Church, faithful to the command of her Lord, “Do this in memory of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24), has always celebrated the Eucharist, especially on Sunday, the day of the Resurrection of Jesus.

How is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist carried out?

The Eucharist unfolds in two great parts which together form one, single act of worship. The Liturgy of the Word involves proclaiming and listening to the Word of God. The Liturgy of the Eucharist includes the presentation of the bread and wine, the prayer or the anaphora containing the words of consecration, and communion.

Who is the minister for the celebration of the Eucharist?

The celebrant of the Eucharist is a validly ordained priest (bishop or priest) who acts in the Person of Christ the Head and in the Name of the Church.

The Last Supper



Week 30

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 279 – 28

What are the essential and necessary elements for celebrating the Eucharist?

The essential elements are wheat bread and grape wine.



In what way is the Eucharist a *memorial* of the sacrifice of Christ?

The Eucharist is a memorial in the sense that it makes present and actual the sacrifice which Christ offered to the Father on the cross, once and for all on behalf of mankind. The sacrificial character of the Holy Eucharist is clear from the very words of Jesus when He instituted the sacrament: “This is my Body which is given for you” and “This cup is the New Covenant in my Blood that will be shed for you” (Luke 22:19-20). The sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one and the same sacrifice. The priest and the victim are the same; only the manner of offering is different: in a bloody manner on the cross, in an un-bloody manner in the Eucharist.

In what way does the Church participate in the Eucharistic sacrifice?

In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of His Body. The lives of the faithful, their praise, their suffering, their prayers, their work, are united to those of Christ. In as much as it is a sacrifice, the Eucharist is likewise offered for all the

faithful, living and dead, in reparation for the sins of all and to obtain spiritual and temporal benefits from God. The Church in heaven is also united to the offering of Christ.

How is Christ present in the Eucharist?

Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist in a unique and incomparable way. He is present in a true, real and substantial way, with His Body and His Blood, with His Soul and His Divinity. In the Eucharist, therefore there is present in a sacramental way, that is, under the Eucharistic species of bread and wine, Christ whole and entire, God and Man.

What is the meaning of transubstantiation?

Transubstantiation means the change of the whole substance of bread into the substance of the Body of Christ and of the whole substance of wine into the substance of His Blood. This change is brought about in the Eucharistic prayer through the efficacy of the word of Christ and by the action of the Holy Spirit. However, the outward characteristics of bread and wine, that is the “Eucharistic species,” remain unaltered.

Does the breaking of the bread divide Christ?

The breaking of the bread does not divide Christ. He is present whole and entire in each of the Eucharistic species and in each of their parts.

Does the breaking of the bread divide Christ?

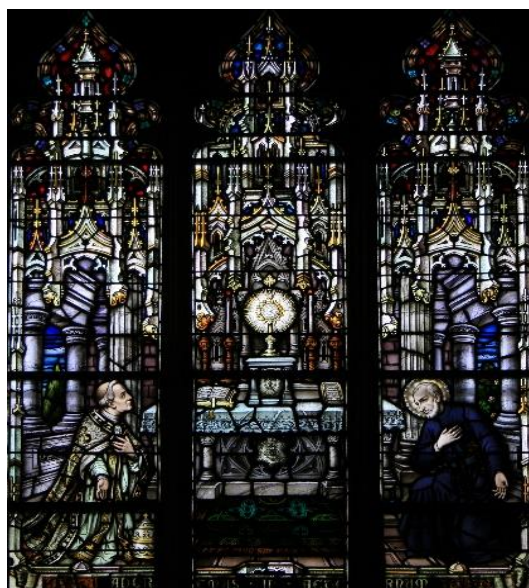
The breaking of the bread does not divide Christ. He is present whole and entire in each of the Eucharistic species and in each of their parts.

How long does the Presence of Christ last in the Eucharist?

The Presence of Christ continues in the Eucharist as long as the Eucharistic species subsist.

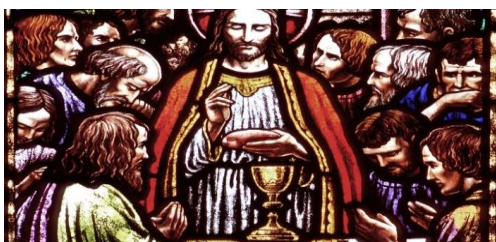
What kind of worship is due to the sacrament of the Eucharist?

The worship due to the sacrament of the Eucharist, whether during the celebration of the Mass or outside it, is the worship of *latria*, that is the adoration given to God alone. The Church guards with the greatest care Hosts that have been consecrated. She brings them to the sick and to other persons who find it impossible to participate at Mass. She also presents them for the solemn adoration of the faithful and she bears them in processions. The Church encourages the faithful to make frequent visits to adore the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle.



DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 289 – 294



Why is the Holy Eucharist the paschal banquet?

The Holy Eucharist is the paschal banquet in as much as Christ sacramentally makes present His Passover and gives us His Body and Blood, offered as food and drink, uniting us to Himself and to one another in His sacrifice.

What is the meaning of the altar?

The altar is the symbol of Christ Himself who is present both as sacrificial victim (the altar of the sacrifice) and as food from heaven which is given to us (the table of the Lord).

When does the Church oblige her members to participate at Holy Mass?

The Church obliges the faithful to participate at Holy Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation. She recommends participation at Holy Mass on other days as well.

When must one receive Holy Communion?

The Church recommends that the faithful, if they have the required dispositions, receive Holy Communion whenever they participate at Holy Mass. However, the Church obliges them to receive Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season.

What is required to receive Holy Communion?

To receive Holy Communion one must be fully incorporated into the Catholic Church and be in the state of grace, that is, not conscious of being in mortal sin. Anyone who is conscious of having committed a grave sin must first receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before going to Communion. Also important for those receiving Holy Communion are a spirit of recollection and prayer, observance of the fast prescribed by the Church, and an appropriate disposition of the body (gestures and dress) as a sign of respect for Christ.

What are the fruits of Holy Communion?

Holy Communion increases our union with Christ and with His Church. It preserves and renews the life of grace received at Baptism and Confirmation and makes us grow in love for our neighbour. It strengthens us in charity, wipes away venial sins and preserves us from mortal sin in the future.

When is it possible to give Holy Communion to other Christians?

Catholic ministers may give Holy Communion licitly (i.e. legally under Church law) to members of the Oriental Churches which are not in full communion with the Catholic Church whenever they ask for it of their own will and possess the required dispositions.

Catholic ministers may licitly give Holy Communion to members of other ecclesial communities only if, in grave necessity, they ask for it of their own will, possess the required dispositions, and give evidence of holding the Catholic faith regarding the sacrament.



Why is the Eucharist a “pledge of future glory”?

The Eucharist is a pledge of future glory because it fills us with every grace and heavenly blessing. It fortifies us for our pilgrimage in this life and makes us long for eternal life. It unites us already to Christ seated at the right hand of the Father, to the Church in heaven and to the Blessed Virgin and all the saints. In the Eucharist, we “break the one bread that provides the

medicine of immortality, the antidote for death and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ” (Saint Ignatius of Antioch)

Week 32

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

From the Compendium of the Catechism: paragraphs: 295 – 305



Why did Christ institute the sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the sick?

Christ, the physician of our soul and body, instituted these sacraments because the new life that He gives us in the sacraments of Christian initiation can be weakened and even lost because of sin. Therefore, Christ willed that His Church should continue His work of healing and salvation by means of these two sacraments.

The sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

What is the name of this sacrament?

It is called the sacrament of Penance, the sacrament of Reconciliation, the sacrament of Forgiveness, the sacrament of Confession, and the sacrament of Conversion.

Why is there a sacrament of Reconciliation after Baptism?

Since the new life of grace received in Baptism does not abolish the weakness of human nature nor the inclination to sin (that is, *concupiscence*), Christ instituted this sacrament for the conversion of the baptised who have been separated from Him by sin.

When did He institute this sacrament?

The Risen Lord instituted this sacrament on the evening of Easter when He showed Himself to His apostles and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:22-23).

Do the baptised have need of conversion?

The call of Christ to conversion continues to resound in the lives of the baptised. Conversion is a continuing obligation for the whole Church. She is holy but includes sinners in her midst.

What is interior penance?

It is the movement of a “contrite heart” (Psalm 51:19) drawn by divine grace to respond to the merciful love of God. This entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, a firm purpose not to sin again in the future and trust in the help of God. It is nourished by hope in divine mercy.

What forms does penance take in the Christian life?

Penance can be expressed in many and various ways but above all in fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. These and many other forms of penance can be practiced in the daily life of a Christian, particularly during the time of Lent and on the penitential day of Friday.

What are the essential elements of the sacrament of Reconciliation?

The essential elements are two: the acts of the penitent who comes to repentance through the action of the Holy Spirit, and the absolution of the priest who in the name of Christ grants forgiveness and determines the ways of making satisfaction.

What are the acts of the penitent?

They are: a careful examination of conscience; contrition (or repentance), which is perfect when it is motivated by love of God and imperfect if it rests on other motives and which includes the determination not to sin again; confession, which consists in the telling of one's sins to the priest; and satisfaction or the carrying out of certain acts of penance which the confessor imposes upon the penitent to repair the damage caused by sin.

Which sins must be confessed?

All grave sins not yet confessed, which a careful examination of conscience brings to mind, must be brought to the sacrament of Penance. The confession of serious sins is the only ordinary way to obtain forgiveness.

When is a person obliged to confess mortal sins?

Each of the faithful who has reached the age of discretion is bound to confess his or her mortal sins at least once a year and always before receiving Holy Communion.

Ancient image of Jesus

