

# Catechesis

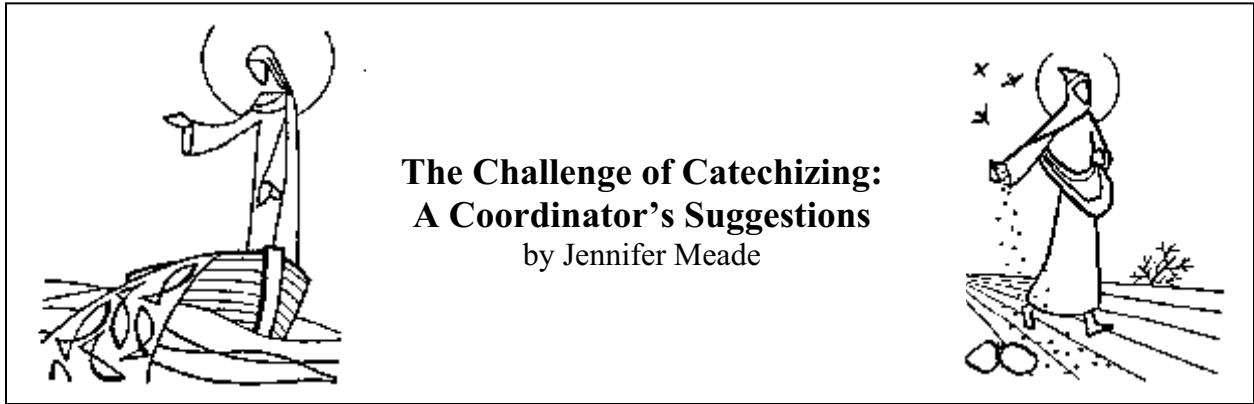
*“All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.”*  
- Napoleon, *Animal Farm*

This quote came to mind as I was trying to describe the youth ministry component of Catechesis as presented in *Renewing the Vision*. I have seen other organizations in the Church pretend that Catechesis is “just one of eight components”, all of equal value. While it is very important to include the other components, and you should provide a “good balance” of each component, the fact remains that you have your position for one reason...to teach the faith to young people. We cannot take *Renewing the Vision* out of context with the dozens of other Church documents about the role of the family, the role of parents, and the role of the Church...all of which place Catechesis as first and foremost.

Youth ministry exists in its present form because CCD was not working, and the Church recognized that a more balanced approach was needed to teach the faith to young people. If teens were filling classrooms at parishes on Sunday morning, or parents were spending countless hours teaching the faith to eager adolescents, then you and I would be working someplace else.

The word “Catechesis” is defined as "oral handing down" from teacher to student. The word comes from the two Greek words ‘kata’, meaning ‘back’, and ‘echo’, meaning ‘echo’. Catechesis is echoing back. Your role as a Coordinator of Youth Ministry is to take what you have learned and have it echo in the young people.

1. The syllabus of information that you need to teach to the young people is outlined in the ***Arlington Diocese Secondary Education Guidelines*** (enclosed at end of chapter). Be sure to use this in all of your planning and let parents know that there is an actual syllabus of information that you use in planning your ministry to young people.
2. **The Challenge of Catechizing** by Jennifer Meade
3. **The Four Pillars of The Catechism of the Catholic Church** summarized by Kate Iadipaolo
4. **The Hierarchy of Truth: The Golden Threads of Catechesis** by Emily Anderson
5. **Teaching the Faith Through Art** by Miguel de Angel
6. **Using Apologetics in Youth Ministry** by David Bristow
7. **The Value of Apologetics for Teenagers** by David Bristow
8. **How Does Someone Become a Saint?**
9. **Saints Related to Young People**
10. **Questions Regarding the Reception of Holy Communion** by Fr. Whitestone
11. **Textbooks and Resources**
12. **Retreats and Conferences Summary**
13. **Youth Ministry Certification**
14. **Opportunities for Continuing Education**



It is vital to incorporate the sharing of **some form of formal catechesis** to our adolescents within any youth ministry model. Without knowledge of the content of the faith, how can we challenge the young people to form an intentional Catholic community—let alone an intimate relationship with our Lord in each aspect of their lives?!?!

However, communicating these truths produces quite the challenge. This Truth is so often counter-cultural and often not truly understood by many of us adults. Further, each parish group has a different format, a different set of young people, and often different prevailing spiritualities. Thus, the delivery of the lessons of the faith will need to vary such that the young people can become engaged members of the learning process. **It is vital that the young people are encouraged to question—while also being led to the fullness of the answers.** Teenagers are thirsting for the Truth. They are also starving for challenge, acknowledgement and independence. Satiating the thirst for truth in a format that helps encourage their innate curiosity of the mysteries of the faith supports a living out of the faith. This can only occur while **prayerfully sustaining a response and answer dialogue**, which is vital to the teen's journey in faith.

We have tried many formats to engage and challenge our young people. The greatest challenge I find is the teacher – finding someone dynamic, enthusiastic and knowledgeable in the faith, as well as in working with teens.

**We have had several formats over the years:** from a formal class in a quarterly seminar format (with adult catechists teaching topics based on the four pillars of the faith), to regular theme nights with guest speakers, to trying to incorporate our priests to educate each week.

What we currently find most effective is having the youth council choose which text series they want to use (from a selection such as included at the end of this piece). We then have the students lead the small group discussions, with at least one adult to guide the way, as well as a notebook to record any questions or needed clarifications for open question night with our priest.

Many of the texts are supplemented with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and/or Scripture, which are on hand for each group. Many also need to be modified for the short time period we have each week, especially since assigning reading ahead of time does not work.

***For example, our regular high school youth night is formatted as such:***

*Dinner (30 min):* Parents bring in assigned menu. Meal begins after the 5pm Mass.

*Bible/Faith Study (45 min):* Some suggested texts follow.

*Large group activity (gym, etc!)*

*Closing prayer*

We also try to have several theme nights to address current issues (dating, virtues, drugs/alcohol, vocations, the annual theme, etc.). Finally we strive to have at least one monthly event outside of youth night (RALLY, Retreats, etc.)

Here are some selections that you might want to review...*Key in any of these is **prayer, prior preparation** to make sure what you want covered can be covered and discussed by the youth within your **allotted time**, and **dynamic student and adult leaders**, prepared to be **open to tough & silly questions**, and finally **more prayer!***



1. *Beginning Apologetics 1-6*: San Juan Catholic Seminars, PO Box 5253, Farmington, NM 87499, 1-877-327-5343; Short readings can be read during catechesis time – and many of these booklets have study guides to assist with student/adult led discussion. There are CCC and Scripture references to add more depth as well.
2. *Ignatius Press Catholic Study Bibles*: These are great for reading together (some students do not read well – and invariably students do not read if assigned over the week!) – and the two sets of discussion questions are great to facilitate deeper understanding.
3. *Catholicism and Reason, Ethics, etc. Series*: These we used in formal classroom settings, as opposed to small group discussion. They have discussion questions after each chapter. The content is good. The chapters are longer.  
CR Publications Inc, 345 Prospect St, Norwood, MA 02062 1-781-762-8811
4. *Didache High School Textbook Series*. One of our priests recommended this. <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/education/ed0187.html> I have not read this or used it – However, it looks like a school text for daily use. This could be modified of course.
5. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
6. *Courageous Love Series* Bible studies for women striving to grow in virtue, Stacey Match, Emmaus Road Publishing, 800-398-5470. (We use this for a monthly ladies group reflection night at Starbuck's.)
7. *Father McBride's Teen Catechism*. Published by Our Sunday Visitor. This has a teacher manual for guided discussions.

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# The Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

summarized by Kate Iadipaolo

*The Catechism and Catechesis: Not sure how to approach catechesis with young people? As Catholics, we've been given numerous structures already which can guide our deepening appreciation of the faith: from daily Scripture readings laid out so carefully in your Roman missal to the liturgical year with all its seasons and feast days, from the theology inherent in the blueprints of a Catholic Church to the mysteries of the faith that are embedded in the way we partake in the sacraments and pray. All of this is detailed in an orderly fashion in that sometimes intimidating "reference" book we call the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Here's an outline of the Four Pillars of the Catechism and a few suggestions for activities.*



## **Part One-Profession of Faith: Man and God † Our Desire for God † Revelation † Transmission of the Divine † Characteristics of Faith † Language of Faith † Sacred Scripture † Scripture and Tradition, the Church, Christ and the Holy Spirit † The Creeds & Significance of each † Declaration of Faith**

1. Have a discussion on the ways that young people come to know God: Which of these ways are knowledge arising from the physical world and which arise inside a person? What things can be said about God on the basis of the world? What things did God reveal to us?
2. Discuss the Protestant notion of *Sola Scriptura* (by Scripture alone) versus the Catholic idea that Revelation is guarded not only in the written word but in the living Church. Remind them that the Bible itself was compiled by the Church which pre-existed any written Gospel.
3. Practice the art of *Lectio Divina* (see Prayer & Worship section in this manual).
4. Split a group into 2 teams, and set up two chairs. One of the chairs represents the answer 'true' and the other one 'false.' Prepare ahead of time statements from the Catechism's explanation of the Creed, modifying about half of them to give the opposite meaning (thus giving the opportunity to correctly answer 'false'). Have the students race to sit in the chair which represents their answer. After each question, briefly discuss the question and answer.



## **Part Two-The Celebration of the Christian Mystery: Paschal Mystery and the Church † Churches Liturgy † Holy Trinity and Liturgy † Details of Liturgy † Liturgical Diversity and Unity † Sacraments † Mystery of the Sacraments † Celebrating the Sacraments † Other Celebrations, Sacramentals, and Funerals**

1. Plan a guided tour of the Church. Dim the lights, play Gregorian chant music, and walk through the Church explaining the significance of various things in the Church (use the worksheets in the Prayer & Worship section of this manual to help you). Have a priest vest for the young people & explain the significance of each article of clothing he wears and the vessels he uses during Mass.
2. Celebrate a feast day of importance to another culture. Have the young people prepare by doing research (perhaps meeting with someone of that culture).
3. Compile a list of young people's Baptismal dates and celebrate them as spiritual birthdays.



### **Part Three-Life in Christ: Man's Vocation † Human Dignity † Free Will † Morality and Virtues † Sin † Human Community † Social Justice † The Church as Mother and Teacher † The Ten Commandments**

1. Collect articles from the newspaper on events of current interest which bear on justice & morality. Have some young people play 'devil's advocate' by attacking the position of the Church on this issue and have others defending the Church's position.
2. Plan an evening prayer service with a priest beginning with a Q&A session about sin, followed by an examination of conscience. Have time available at the end for confession. Prepare a quiet reflective environment for this using candles and incense (no allergies preventing), etc.
3. Complete one of the programs in the Justice & Service section of this manual. Debrief the event using the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.



### **Part Four-Christian Prayer: Prayer and Christian Life † Revelation of Prayer † Universal call † The Old Testament † Age of the Church † The Tradition of Prayer † Guidelines of Prayer † Struggle of Prayer † The Lord's Prayer**

1. Read about a few saints who have had notable conversion stories. Have each young person pick a saint who 'struggled with prayer' and write a prayer of thanksgiving for the conversion as if they were themselves the saint.
2. Do a petition Rosary. Have young persons offer intentions for each bead of the Rosary and then lead the prayer for that bead. End with a litany to the Blessed Virgin.
3. Say an "Our Father" out loud, pausing after each phrase to allow young people to offer a few words in relation to that phrase. For example, you'd begin 'Our Father' and then pause. Take turns offering whatever free association comes to mind for that phrase. Someone might say "I am your child" or "I know you through my earthly father". After allowing the opportunity for response, continue with the next phrase "who art in heaven," then pause. Continue thus through the entire prayer. Allow sufficient time for this meditation. You could prepare for this exercise by going through the Catechism's explanation of the Lord's Prayer.

*Below are some excerpts from the Catechism which touch directly on the four pillars mentioned above. You could use them as introductory remarks to a program or as background.*

#### **1. The Profession of Faith**

**CCC 26** We begin our profession of faith by saying: "I believe" or "We believe". Before expounding the Church's faith, as confessed in the Creed, celebrated in the liturgy and lived in observance of God's commandments and in prayer, we must first ask what "to believe" means. Faith is man's response to God, who reveals himself and gives himself to man, at the same time bringing man a superabundant light as he searches for the ultimate meaning of his life. Thus we shall consider first that search (*Chapter One*), then the divine Revelation by which God comes to meet man (*Chapter Two*), and finally the response of faith (*Chapter Three*).

#### **2. The Celebration of the Christian Mystery**

**CCC 1066** In the Symbol of the faith the Church confesses the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of the plan of God's "good pleasure" for all creation: the Father accomplishes the "mystery of his will" by giving his beloved Son and his Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world and for the

glory of his name.<sup>1</sup> For this reason, the Church celebrates in the liturgy above all the Paschal mystery by which Christ accomplished the work of our salvation.

**CCC 1068** It is this mystery of Christ that the Church proclaims and celebrates in her liturgy so that the faithful may live from it and bear witness to it in the world:

### ***3. Life in Christ***

**CCC 1691** "Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God's own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning. Remember who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Never forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of the Kingdom of God."

**CCC 1692** The Symbol of the faith confesses the greatness of God's gifts to man in his work of creation, and even more in redemption and sanctification. What faith confesses, the sacraments communicate: by the sacraments of rebirth, Christians have become "children of God," "partakers of the divine nature." Coming to see in the faith their new dignity, Christians are called to lead henceforth a life "worthy of the gospel of Christ."

### ***4. Christian Prayer***

**CCC 2558** "Great is the mystery of the faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed (*Part One*) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (*Part Two*), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (*Part Three*). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God.

# The Hierarchy of Truths: The Golden Threads of Catechesis

by Emily Anderson

Whether it's through using a Milky Way Bar to teach the Trinity, figuring out the best way to teach the importance of Confirmation, or challenging teens to look at the passion as the basis of our lives, the primary task of a Coordinator of Youth Ministry is passing on our faith. We are each called to pass down the faith that we have learned to young people. In order to have a comprehensive youth ministry program, we must incorporate purposeful catechesis into our meetings with youth (*Renewing the Vision*). This catechesis is at the very heart of youth ministry and really, why youth ministry exists: to pass on the very person of Jesus Christ.

Where to start in regards to catechesis with young people can be very daunting. With so many essential concepts, doctrines, and dogmas in our Church it can often cause one's head to spin. The truths of our faith have a hierarchal system to them. They are not meant to be some random occurrence of happenstance, but instead something that makes sense, and that works in a systematic order.

All catechesis is meant to be both systematic and organic (General Directory for Catechesis). This means that catechesis is meant to follow a particular order, to be unified and to make sense. Additionally, the organic nature of catechesis shows us that we are not called to teach merely concept or facts, but that of the life of Jesus Christ, a living breathing person, who enlightens everything that we know and believe. Systematic catechesis helps to uphold a young person's dignity by allowing them the ability to learn our faith in a way that makes sense and that will help them see how teachings are related to one another.

The hierarchy of truths, also commonly referred to as the golden threads of catechesis, is a helpful way to see how we can come to understand our faith. These truths are the very basic tenets of our faith. Every teaching of our faith in some way comes down to one of the five topics listed below. It is important to understand that this list is not meant to say that some teachings are less real or less true than others. It simply means that these truths are foundational to the understanding of our faith. They illuminate other truths of our faith. These truths connect doctrines to each other which helps us to see their unity.

## The Hierarchy of Truths

1. **The Trinity:** This is the most essential truth of our faith. Without it, no other truths make sense. The Trinity **MUST** be taught in every doctrine.
2. **The Incarnation:** Christ is the center of the world. All catechesis should be Christocentric (*Catechesi Tradendae* 5). Everything we teach is connected to who Christ is and what Christ continues to do.
3. **The Paschal Mystery:** All that Christ is, culminates in the Paschal Mystery. The Paschal Mystery is the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord.
4. **The Church as the dispenser of mysteries (sacraments):** This teaches of the importance of the Church, most especially in light of the sacraments.
5. **The Church as the mystical body of Christ/Human Dignity:** Because God is a communion of persons, we too participate in the body of Christ. Human Dignity plays a role here in the fact that we image God and the Trinity is a communion of persons, so we as the Body of Christ image this community of persons.

When we catechize, we are teaching these basic truths of our faith, while at the same time, going deeper. Each of these truths is the basic building block to the doctrines we teach. They have to be taught in a progressive order and in a systematic way that connects a doctrine to this basic truth. For example, teens cannot understand why abortion is wrong if they first are not taught about human dignity. However, they cannot learn about human dignity until they understand the Trinity, etc.

Think of catechesis as a spiral. The very root of that spiral is these truths, but each year with our young people, we delve deeper into one of these truths. This is not to say that we simply teach these five things over and over again, but that everything that a Coordinator of Youth Ministry teaches is based on these concepts. For instance, if you were teaching young people and you wanted to explain the dangers of relativism, it should be rooted in the Trinity, although it might not be obviously directed to the Trinity. Everything that we believe in some way relates back to this hierarchy. We need to be making these connections for the teens that we work with. I would encourage all CYMs to think about this as they are planning a lesson with their teens. It is actually a very fun challenge! I dare you to find a teaching that doesn't fall into one of these categories. (I sure haven't!)

In my own youth ministry, I have found that by connecting different teachings back to these fundamental truths my teens are internalizing their faith. This is key to the formation of teens who will stay Catholic beyond the life of a particular youth ministry program.



For more information on the hierarchy of truths and catechesis with young people, you may want to review the following resources:

1. *Catechesi Tradendae* (“On Catechesis in our Time”). This document is written by the late Pope John Paul I. It is one of the premier documents on catechesis in our Church.
2. *The General Directory for Catechesis*. This book, put out by the Congregation for the Clergy is a MUST HAVE for all CYMs. It is meant to present the context and content of catechesis.
3. *The National Directory for Catechesis*. This book, produced by the USCCB, goes along with the General Directory for Catechesis as its companion. It is a reference point for forming catechists, developing resources as well as providing practical application.
4. The Association for Catechumenal Ministry produces an RCIA catechist’s manual (available at [www.acmrcia.org](http://www.acmrcia.org)) that is stellar. This manual gives the breakdown of essential information to teach approximately fifty doctrines. Because its intended audience is those in the RCIA process, its instruction is basic and very simple to understand. I use this as a start for doctrines that are often tricky to teach.
5. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis*. This book goes deeper into the Hierarchy of Truths and the different pedagogies in Catechesis.

\*\*Much of the information on the hierarchy of truths comes from lectures from Professor Scott Sollom at Franciscan University of Steubenville.\*\*

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## Teaching the Faith through Art

by Miguel de Angel

Having been a professional artist in my previous career, I have always looked for ways to use art more directly in ministry. I have done greeting cards and t-shirts as fundraisers, painted murals, used my own art in talks, and encouraged students to draw after a talk as an alternative to journaling among other things. I also use art to reach the students that are visual learners. Not everyone internalizes things through reading or listening so art can be a great alternative medium. This article will focus on how to use art as part of your talks, presentations and discussions even if you are not an artist. If you are looking for ways to encourage your teens to use their artistic talents as a way to praise God - the article titled “**the aRts**” – also in this manual – has more relevant information on that topic.

### Why art?

The Church has a great art tradition. In fact, for hundreds of years the Church was the number one patron of arts and artists in the world. Hundreds of years ago art was the principal way the stories of our faith were transmitted to the masses. They really understood the old adage “a picture is worth a thousand words.” People needed to “read” details to a story in a single painting or drawing. Many of the great artists did that and much more.

Art communicates at many different levels, conscious and unconscious, connecting with the viewer mentally, instinctually and viscerally in ways other mediums can’t. Students will often be able to read a scene in a picture with great insight and add to a conversation when comparing two pieces of art even if they are not greatly familiar with the subject. For these reasons, art is immensely valuable as a tool to use with teens.

### Using Art in Youth Ministry

Start by figuring out what you may want to cover. Is there a particular Bible passage that comes to mind? Once you have decided on a theme, you can turn to the Internet. Internet searches are an invaluable tool when looking for religious art to use in talks. At this point, you should search for images by title. Parables and biblical scenes are an easy place to start. Names of biblical figures and saints are also useful.

I found the below example<sup>1</sup> of two images of the *Prodigal Son* very useful. They depict the return of the prodigal son. Both are by Rembrandt in different mediums and at different times in his life. You can also compare different artists’ work; they do not have to be by the same artist.

You can read the Bible passage before a general discussion of the images or have the discussion and *then* read the passage to see how your student’s perception of the image may have changed after reading the text.

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<sup>1</sup>Images by Rembrandt from the blog entry *A Mending Shift* by Jeromy Johnson.  
<http://www.mendingshift.com/2007/12/14/rembrandts-the-return-of-the-prodigal-son-4/>

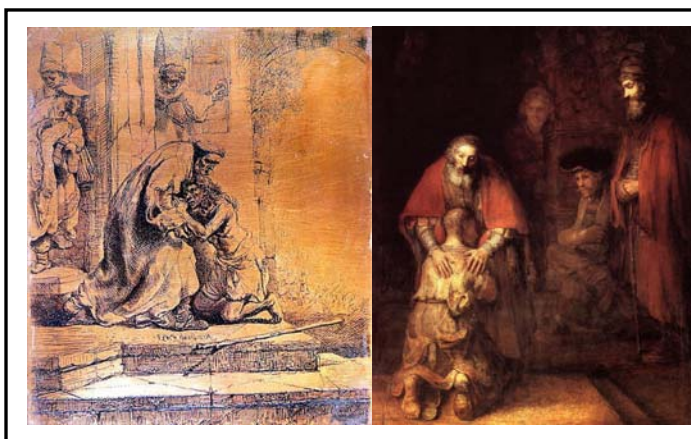
The particular blog where the two images of the *Prodigal Son* came from suggests great questions to help foster discussions when comparing the two images. The link does not have the complete Bible passage but does include a link to it on the Bible Gateway ([biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com))<sup>2</sup>

Here are a few I would suggest for this particular example:

- How is the depiction of the father and the son similar/different in each picture?
- How do the figures gathered around the father and son affect the scene? Who are they?
- Does the color and lighting of the images suggest any additional insights into the scene that might not otherwise be there? If so what does it say?

### Art Analysis

When looking at art, there are certain things that we should look at in order to “read” it and interpret the artist’s message. The color and lighting of the scene, the posture and expression of figures and the placement of the elements in the picture, including figures and background, should be considered.



I personally like Rembrandt’s line drawing of the Prodigal Son (the image to the left) more in this example. While the clothes of the son in the second image (the image to the right) are torn and one shoe is missing, the son in the first image hardly has enough clothes to cover himself, suggesting the harsh time he’s had away from the father. The father is leaning forward. You can almost feel the father’s mercy and compassion in his pose and expression as he runs to help his son to his feet. It is clearer to me that the people in the background are servants in the first drawing. They seem to have a sense of urgency as they bring the son new and clean clothes.

The one thing I particularly like in the second image is the lighting, especially the contrast between light and dark. It is almost as if the son has been in darkness and has come back to the light. Remember that people in Rembrandt’s time really did “read” paintings. Even though the light source is coming from behind the son, if you read the painting from top left to bottom right we go from darkness to light. People back then would have gotten this, and I bet your students will too.

In addition to these suggestions, I encourage you to take advantage of the many Smithsonian museums. We are lucky to live close to so many free museums in D.C. Take advantage of them and plan a field trip to the National Gallery or other art venues.

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<sup>2</sup> The Bible Gateway has Catholic and non-Catholic versions of the Bible so it is recommended to double-check which version you are looking at.



## Online Resources:

[www.artbible.info](http://www.artbible.info) has a selection of art inspired by Bible stories, with every painting linked to a related bible passage.

[www.christusrex.org/www2/art](http://www.christusrex.org/www2/art) has links to a small collection of religious art/paintings listed by themes and artists.

[christusrex.org/www2/art/rembrandt.htm](http://christusrex.org/www2/art/rembrandt.htm)

I'm including this link to the Rembrandt section of this site because he's a highly regarded *master painter* with a plethora of religious paintings to his name.

## Glossary:

Religious art - Art depicting religious images and scenes.

Iconography - A specific tradition of Christian art with specific materials, processes and style where prayer is an integral part of each step in the process. Religious icons generally represent God, Christ, Mary, saints or angels in a flat background. Symbols often help identify the figures: St. Peter might hold the keys to heaven, St. Paul a sword, etc.

Sacred art - Art used in liturgy and Sacrament

*After an art career spanning from multimedia design to cartoon animation and children's books, Miguel De Angel strongly felt the call to youth ministry. It did not take long before he leaned into it and took a Youth Ministry position at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Alexandria, VA. Miguel now looks for ways to use his artistic talents in ministry.*

## Using Apologetics in Youth Ministry

by David Bristow

Knowing and defending are inextricably related. A real and critical defense of Catholic theology has to be rooted in a proper and reasonable understanding of the faith. With this in mind, the question of *how* has to be addressed. How can we as youth ministers, adult volunteers, retreat coordinators, or CCD teachers work apologetics into our work with young people? How does one specifically implement a solid “defense of the faith” into high school or junior high programs and keep teens interested?



Apologetics can often be intimidating because many youth workers do not know where to begin. Others fear they do not know enough about apologetics and are under the false impression that they have to possess an immense amount of theological or philosophical knowledge to pull it off. Yet it is not a question of how much a youth worker understands about Catholic apologetics, but rather of the willingness to find programs, speakers, or materials that do. Here are some ideas and tips that may serve as a way to include apologetics as a part of a youth ministry program.



Personally, I think one of the most enjoyable ways to teach our young people about how to defend the faith is with **Apologetic Jeopardy**. My adult volunteers and I put together a Jeopardy board complete with topics that frequently come up in real life situations. Examples included chastity, pro-life, faith vs. science, Marian devotion, purgatory, and the sacraments. Under each category, we chose five questions worth different point values. The questions did not have to be given in classic Jeopardy style—in fact, most of them were either true-or-false or multiple choice. We split the teams into male versus female and allowed the teams to work as partners to answer the questions. We then posed the questions as if they were coming from a peer at school or a neighbor on the street.

For example, one of our questions was “What is the deal with purgatory?” Is it a) a belief that arose in the Middle Ages, but is no longer professed by the Church, b) a middle state where people go to get a second chance to gain entrance into heaven, c) a place where the “not entirely good,” but “not entirely bad” people reside, or d) the state after death where our sins and the effects of our sins are purged by Christ’s love before going to heaven? After each question had been answered correctly, the game host gave a brief explanation of the answer. Surprisingly, the game moved very quickly as the teens loved the competition and the prizes given for correctly answered daily doubles.

I feel it is important to bring in a speaker (or speakers) at least twice a year to answer the teenagers’ questions regarding some aspect of their faith. For instance, we brought in a Youth Apostles priest to discuss the significance of the Eucharist in the lives of the young people. When Father David Sharland agreed to speak at the Sunday night meeting, I asked if he could also take questions regarding the Eucharist afterward. From the talk and ensuing questions, our team formed a sheet of common objections and misunderstandings about the Eucharist and how we as Catholics could respond to them. At the next Sunday meeting, we went over them briefly and even acted out a scenario with the teenagers.

Another option is to form a panel of volunteers prepared to answer and defend the faith (we called it the “Catholic Guru Panel”). I asked the teenagers to write down common misunderstandings or sincere questions for those who were on the panel. Any question that couldn’t be answered by the board resulted in a reward for the teenagers and a penalty for the panel. Penalties included pelting the “Gurus” with

water balloons or freshly made cream pies, a sight the teens absolutely cherished (n.b.: you may want to leave the penalty part out when recruiting volunteers for the activity). Speakers and panels such as these provide a positive and entertaining environment for apologetic work, giving young people the opportunity to sharpen their knowledge and defense of the faith.

In order to provide resources for your adult volunteers and teens, it is always a good idea to have a list of apologetic websites, pamphlets, and magazines available. This bibliography can serve as a way for young people and educators alike to research their faith and strengthen it against common objections. All youth ministry programs are different in their approaches to teens; however, I feel it is absolutely critical that youth leaders stress regularly the importance of cultivating a *reasonable* faith. Often our teens need reassurance about their faith from respected adult youth workers. They continuously want to hear that the Catholic faith is practical and worth living. As youth ministers, CCD teachers, retreat coordinators, and adult volunteers, we are not required to have all the answers. Instead, we simply need to know that there *are* answers, and how we can help teens find them. Let us emphasize Christ's words, "seek and you shall find," for if our teenagers hold a reasonable Catholic faith, then any future objections to it can and will be overcome.

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*David Bristow currently serves as the Director of Youth Formation at Saint Joseph Catholic Church in Herndon, VA. He is married with a daughter and enjoys relating contemporary Christian theology to youth ministry practices.*

## The Value of Apologetics for Teenagers

by David Bristow

In the movie “The Last Samurai,” director Edward Zwick presents the tale of an ancient line of Japanese warriors defending their traditional codes and beliefs against the encroachment of Western modernization. The story perfectly highlights the dichotomy often witnessed between the sacred values of a people and the ever-changing ideals of the culture they live in. On many occasions, the split between what is right, just, and good on the one hand and what is

considered modern, updated, and efficient on the other creates such tension that a war inevitably ignites between the two. This was especially the case with the Samurai, who had to defend what they knew to be truth against their own empire, which was set on financial gain and leading them toward moral decline.

Like the Samurai of old, Catholics today are also faced with the task of defending their beliefs in a world that so often appears bent on bringing them down. In fact, it is our Catholic teenagers who are doing much of this defending, for the secular media and modern philosophy are incessantly persuading their peers and educators alike that Catholicism is unreasonable, impractical, and ultimately untenable.

We as Catholic youth ministers need to understand the value of apologetics and stress the reasonability of our faith. Catholic teens cannot simply slide through high school these days without facing at least a few questions about their devotion. Many people, influenced by contemporary thought stressing “God’s unknowable existence,” comment that Catholicism either needs to be updated or replaced with Eastern religion, or abolished altogether. Others complain about “obsolete moral practices” found within the Church, or question the sensibility of the sacraments. The magnitude and depth of the questions aimed at our Catholic teenagers can severely damage or even kill the intellectual component of their faith, leaving them worried, confused, and less likely to follow Church teaching. If St. Augustine is correct in saying that we *always* have a reason for our faith, then eroding the rational foundations of our Catholic faith will lead us hopelessly down the road of unbelief.

Contrary to first impressions, implementing apologetics into youth ministry does not have to be painful or boring (I’ll have some thoughts on that in the next issue). It can be as simple as answering one Catholic question a week during regularly scheduled youth meetings. The main point of doing such apologetic work is to show teens how our Catholic faith makes sense for all people regardless of their personal backgrounds. Furthermore, it reinforces the idea that Catholicism is not just some whimsical, two-dimensional, or repressive thought-system, but rather a loving, well-grounded faith that has been tested and proven over millennia. It is paramount that youth ministry teams reach the minds of our teenagers before secular or non-Catholic proselytizers do. Our goal must be to inform young people about the reasonability of the Catholic faith, and to explain to them the importance of not giving up on their beliefs simply because a professor or some other authority counsels them to do so. Strengthening the teenage mind will strengthen the teenage heart.

I *don’t* think apologetics should be considered the foundation of a youth ministry program. Rather, it should be used in order to explain the foundations of our faith (i.e., Christ, the Church, and the sacraments). Saint Peter tells us, “Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope” (1 Pt 3:15). While instilling hope in Jesus Christ and his beautiful Church in the

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young people we serve, let us teach them the value of defending it with loving respect, gentleness, and kindness. This strong knowledge will provide our teenagers with the confidence to move forward in faith and holiness, and to walk as future saints in the Catholic Church.

*“I want a Laity who know their religion and who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold, and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it.”*

—John Henry Cardinal Newman

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### **“How does someone get to be declared a Saint?”**

- ❖ To determine sainthood, the Greek Orthodox Church goes by general public opinion, and other (non-Catholic) Christian sects are fairly casual about who they believe is in heaven. But the Catholic Church knows well that abuses can arise when sainthood is determined by popularity without a clear procedure. “In fact, the Church is the only religious organization in the world that has a regular, legalistic process for determining who’s with God.” (145)
- ❖ The declaration of sainthood is reserved to the Pope, who abides by a procedure that is long, complicated, and very strict.
- ❖ The commissions charged with investigating the issue begin by looking at a person with a suspicious eye. The more renowned the sanctity of a faithful departed one, the longer it will usually take for an official decision. The dust must settle, and usually, the decision waits until everyone who personally knew the deceased in question also dies. That way, the evidence will stand on its own “uncolored by personal affection or hostility.” (145)
- ❖ One of the things commissions are reputed to look for is “evidence of joy,” oftentimes present in a saint alongside some of the severest of penance.
- ❖ Another thing the commissions look for is strictest obedience to the Church and her laws. “True, many saints have persuaded certain hard-nosed prelates to change their minds, but they obeyed those prelates even as they changed them.” (146)
- ❖ The primary thing one looks for in a saint is “heroic virtue”—the practice of all Christian virtues in a truly perfect and exemplary manner. “Martyrdom is one good sign of heroic virtue, but even that has to be proved. It’s not enough to be a Christian (in full communion with the Church) and to be skinned alive by someone who isn’t. There’s got to be proof that the killing was done *in odium fidei*, in hatred of the Faith.” (147)
- ❖ “Heroic Virtue” also comes in quieter varieties. Saints like St. Catherine Labouré demonstrate this. There is an immense importance of “quiet heroism, of fighting the good fight inside yourself every day, without making a fuss about it.” (147) After all, how very few of the saints populating heaven remain hidden with God, the extent of their holiness still kept from our earthly eyes?
- ❖ The final requirement for sainthood is MIRACLES. The miracles have to count after a person’s death in order to count toward canonization. The idea is that if God wants it known that this person is in heaven, he will allow an extraordinary event in answer to prayers to the candidate. Miracles are subject to the full rigor of science, history, medicine and theology—to assure that this event did not happen due to natural causes... all of which takes time.

- ❖ “Then, if you’ve got your evidence of sanctity, you’re deceased, and you’ve pass all the inquiries (including certifiable miracles), you get declared ‘Blessed.’ If further evidence comes to light, you get put through the process again, and then, if you pass, you go to full canonization.” (148)

*The above material uses excerpts from Kevin Orlin Johnson’s Expressions of the Catholic Faith (New York: Random House, Inc./Ballantine Books, 1994), pp. 144-149. Page numbers for direct quotes are cited in parenthesis immediately following the quotes.*

## **Saints Related to Young People**

### **Thomas Aquinas—Academics**

Thomas was a gentle teacher who believed faith and reason when used wisely would enable all humanity to know and love God as the angels. He studied in Paris from 1245-1248 under Saint Albert the Great, then accompanied Albertus to Cologne. Here he received the nickname “dumb ox,” though he is now considered a Doctor of the Church, and one of the most intelligent philosophers of all time.

### **Vitus—Against Oversleeping**

For obscure reasons, some 16th century Germans believed they could obtain a year's good health by dancing before the statue of Saint Vitus on his feast day. This dancing developed almost into a mania, and was confused with *chorea*, the nervous condition later known as *Saint Vitus' Dance*, the saint being invoked against it.

### **Francis of Assisi—Animals, Catholic Action**

It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.

Son of a rich cloth merchant. Misspent youth. Street brawler and some-time soldier. During an imprisonment in Perugia, he had a conversion experience, including a reported message from Christ calling him to leave this worldly life. Upon release, Francis began taking his religion seriously.

### **Christopher—Drivers**

His fame derives from the pious legend of him being a "Christ-bearer" (= Christopher). He was a powerfully built man who wandered the world in search of novelty and adventure. He came upon a hermit who lived beside a dangerous stream and served others by guiding them to safe places to cross.

### **George—Boy Scouts**

Several stories have been attached to Saint George, the best known of which is the *Golden Legend*. In it, a dragon lived in a lake near Silena, Libya. Whole armies had gone up against this fierce creature, and had gone down in painful defeat. The monster ate two sheep each day; when mutton was scarce, lots were drawn in local villages, and maidens were substituted for sheep. Into this country came Saint George. Hearing the story on a day when a princess was to be eaten, he crossed himself, rode to battle against the serpent, and killed it with a single blow with his lance. George then held forth with a magnificent sermon, and converted the locals. Given a large reward by the king, George distributed it to the poor, then rode away.

### **Aloysius Gonzaga—Catholic Youth**

Italian noble who grew up in a castle, the son of a compulsive gambler. Cousin of Saint Rudolph Acquaviva. Trained from age four as a soldier and courtier. Suffered from kidney disease which he considered a blessing as it left him bed-ridden with time for prayer. While still a boy himself, he taught catechism to poor boys. Received First Communion from Saint Charles Borromeo. At age 18 he signed away his legal claim to his family's lands and title to his brother, and became a Jesuit novice. Spiritual student of Saint Robert Bellarmine. Tended plague victims in Rome in the outbreak of 1591.

**Joseph—Families, doubt**

Descendant of the house of David. Layman. Carpenter. Earthly spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Foster and adoptive father of Jesus Christ. Visionary who was visited by angels. Noted for his willingness to immediately get up and do what God told him.

**John the Apostle—Friendship**

Son of Zebedee and Salome. Fisherman. Brother of Saint James the Great, and called one of the *Sons of Thunder*. Disciple of Saint John the Baptist. Friend of Saint Peter the Apostle. Called by Jesus during the first year of His ministry, and traveled everywhere with Him, becoming so close as to be known as *the beloved disciple*. Took part in the Last Supper. The only one of the Twelve not to forsake the Savior in the hour of His Passion, standing at the foot of the cross.

**Agnes of Rome—Girl Scouts**

At age 12 or 13 Agnes was ordered to sacrifice to pagan gods and lose her virginity by rape. She was taken to a Roman temple to Minerva (Athena), and when led to the altar, she made the Sign of the Cross. She was threatened, then tortured when she refused to turn against God. Several young men presented themselves, offering to marry her, whether from lust or pity is not known. She said that to do so would be an insult to her heavenly Spouse, that she would keep her consecrated virginity intact, accept death, and see Christ. Martyr Mentioned in first eucharistic prayer. On her feast day two lambs are blessed at her church in Rome, and then their wool is woven into the palliums (bands of white wool) which the pope confers on archbishops as symbol of their jurisdiction.

**Martin De Porres—Social Justice**

Illegitimate son of a Spanish nobleman and a young freed black slave, he grew up in poverty. Spent part of his youth with a surgeon-barber from whom he learned some medicine and care of the sick. At age 11 he became a servant in the Dominican priory. Promoted to almoner, he begged more than \$2,000 a week from the rich to support the poor and sick of Lima. Placed in charge of the Dominican's infirmary; known for his tender care of the sick and for his spectacular cures. His superiors dropped the stipulation that "no black person may be received to the holy habit or profession of our order" and Martin took vows as a Dominican brother.

**Cecilia—Music**

She vowed her virginity to God, but her parents married her to Valerian of Trastevere. Cecilia told her new husband that she was accompanied by an angel, but in order to see it, he must be purified. He agreed to the purification, and was baptised; returning from the ceremony, he found her in prayer accompanied by a praying angel. The angel placed a crown on each of their heads, and offered Valerian a favor; the new convert asked that his brother be baptised. The *Acta* of Cecilia includes the following: "While the profane music of her wedding was heard, Cecilia was singing in her heart a hymn of love for Jesus, her true spouse." It was this phrase that led to her association with music, singers, musicians, etc.

**Isadore of Sevilla—Internet**

Son of Severianus and Theodora, known for their piety. Initially a poor student, he gave the problem over to God and became one of the most learned men of his time. Priest. Required seminaries in every diocese, wrote a rule for religious orders. Prolific writer including a dictionary, an encyclopedia, a history of Goths, and a history of the world beginning with creation. Completed the Mozarabic liturgy which is still in use in Toledo, Spain. Presided at the Second Council of Seville, and the Fourth Council of Toledo. Introduced the works of Aristotle to Spain.

**Genesius- Theater**

Benedictine monk. Martyred defending the altar at the monastery Bleze, Côte-d'Or, France against Norman invaders

### **John Bosco—Young Workers**

“All for God and for His Glory. In whatever you do, think of the Glory of God as your main goal.” Bosco would go to circuses, fairs and carnivals, practice the tricks he saw magicians perform, and then present one-boy shows. After his performance, while he still had an audience of boys, he would repeat the homily he had heard earlier in church. He was a teacher. Worked with youth, finding places where they could meet, play and pray, teaching catechism to orphans and apprentices. Chaplain in a hospice for girls. Wrote short treatises aimed at explaining the faith to children, and then taught children how to print them. Founded the *Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB)* in 1859, priests who work with and educate boys, under the protection of Our Lady, Help of Christians, and Saint Francis de Sales. Founded the *Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians* in 1872, and *Union of Cooperator Salesians* in 1875.

### **Francis DeSales—Writers**

“Do not wish to be anything but what you are, and try to be that perfectly.” Born in a castle to a well-placed family, his parents intended that he become a lawyer, enter politics, and carry on the family line and power. Doctor of Law. It was at this point that he received a message telling him to “*Leave all and follow Me.*” He took this as a call to the priesthood, a move his family fiercely opposed. However, he pursued a devoted prayer life, and his gentle ways won over the family. Preacher, writer and spiritual director in the district of Chablais. His simple, clear explanations of Catholic doctrine, and his gentle way with everyone, brought many back to the Roman Church. Bishop of Geneva at age 35. Travelled and evangelized throughout the Duchy of Savoy, working with children whenever he could. Helped found the *Order of the Visitation* with Saint Jeanne de Chantal.

### **Raphael—Guardian Angels**

Archangel. One of the three angels known by name, and one of the seven that stand before God's throne. Lead character in the deuterocanonical book of *Tobit* in which he travelled with (and guarded) Tobiah, and cured a man's blindness; hence his connection with travellers, young people, blindness, healing and healers. The force behind the healing power of the sheep pool mentioned in John 5:1-4.

### **Ignatius of Loyola—Retreats**

Wounded in the leg by a cannonball at the siege of Pampeluna on 20 May 1521, an injury that left him partially crippled for life. During his recuperation the only books he had access to were *The Golden Legend*, a collection of lives of the saints, and the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph the Carthusian. On his recovery he took a vow of chastity, hung his sword before the altar of the Virgin of Montserrat, and donned a pilgrim's robes. Lived in a cave from 1522 to 1523. Journeyed to Rome and the Holy Land where he worked to convert Muslims. His meditations, prayers, visions and insights led to forming the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)* on 15 August 1534.

*Main Source of Facts:* <http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/patron02.htm>



## Questions regarding the Reception of Holy Communion

(In the months leading up to the 2004 presidential election, there was much attention given to the issue of how the Catholic Church should handle the reception of Holy Communion by pro-abortion Catholic politicians. This also led to some questions about whether young people who struggle with being pro-life should be receiving Holy Communion. We posed these questions to Fr. David Whitestone, the Judicial Vicar for the Diocese of Arlington. He provides the following...)

Following are some relevant canons:

**912**-Any baptized person who is not prohibited by law can and must be admitted to Holy Communion.

**913.1**-For the administration of the Most Holy Eucharist to children, it is required that they have a sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity, and can receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.

**913.2**-The Most Holy Eucharist may be given to children who are in danger of death, however, if they are able to distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and to receive Communion reverently.

**915**-Those who are excommunicated or interdicted after the imposition or declaration of the penalty and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.

**916**-A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or to receive the Body of the Lord without prior sacramental confession unless a grave reason is present and there is no opportunity of confessing; in this case the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible.

### Some thoughts on how these canons might be relevant to teens:

**Concerning 913** - The canon speaks of "sufficient knowledge" and "understanding the mystery of Christ according to their capacity". The understanding that what is received is not "ordinary food" is the minimum required for young children in danger of death. A teen ( according to their capacity - perhaps there are situations of "special needs") is required to have a more developed faith, i.e. there must be a Catholic understanding on the part of the recipient that what is being received is truly Christ and not merely a sign or symbol of Christ.

**Concerning 915** - It is not possible, according to the law, for a teen under the age of 18 to incur any automatic excommunication prohibiting reception of the Eucharist. It is possible for a teen who is at least 16 years old to be excommunicated but this is only after a trial and judgment of the Bishop. I don't think this is very likely. The second part of this canon could be relevant - "those who persist in manifest grave sin". Manifest means public or observable. It is not simply a

thought or an opinion held in one's heart or mind. It must be "obstinate" - held AFTER repeated efforts on the part of the Church to correct and reconcile. It must be "grave sin" and not simply "sin".

A principle of canon law is that any law that restricts the rights of the faithful MUST be interpreted strictly meaning that for a right to be restricted the offense must fit the definition provided in the law exactly. Canon 1323 clearly states that a person is not subject to penalties EVEN if they have broken the law if they are unaware that they broke the law, the person who acted out of physical force or fear, the person lacked the use of reason, or again, is not yet 16 years old.

**Concerning 916**-What is required for a "mortal" or grave sin? Grave matter AND sufficient reflection AND full consent of the will. If all these are present, the teen must receive sacramental confession. See canon 913.1 for the "exception".

### **Another Question...**

*"What if a teen states that he believes that abortion is sometimes OK or if he says he doesn't have a problem with "Gay marriage" or the ordination of women or some other definitive Church teaching?"*

The context is all important here. Most likely the teen is struggling and seeking for truth. He or she is in the process of internalizing the faith and is actually in the process of formation. There might be any other number of reasons the young person is expressing these "opinions". This is not a canonical offense punishable by the imposition of a penalty that prohibits Communion. It is also likely that the young person has not committed a "mortal sin". What is being expressed is not in accord with the faith but the proper response on the part of parent and minister is to engage gently and honestly in discussion. In these circumstances the grace of the sacrament is exactly what is needed.

HOWEVER, it is certainly possible that the views are held with such ferocity, all openness to the Church is absent, and the teen possesses contempt for the Church and her teachings. In this case communion should not be received. One of St. Augustine's great quotes: "Lord I believe, help my disbelief". I believe that most of the "dissent" from teens is simply part of this process of coming to deeper and hopefully Catholic faith. Another quote from St. Augustine: "Lord grant me chastity, but not now." The Eucharist is a gift to and for a sinful Church on the road to Christ. It certainly requires faith but it also is meant to bring faith to fullness.

*Fr. David Whitestone is the Pastor of St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Fairfax. Since his ordination, he has been parochial vicar at the Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Arlington, St. Mary Parish in Alexandria, St. Louis Parish in Alexandria and St. Philip Parish in Falls Church. He was first assigned to the Tribunal in 1993 as advocate and defender of the bond and was appointed judge in 1998. He has a great love for youth ministry and attends the Diocesan WorkCamp each summer to be with the young people.*

## Textbooks vs. Resources

by Kevin Bohli

It is very difficult to provide a list of resources for Coordinators of Youth Ministry to use in their programs. Many wonderful resources on Youth Ministry are written by Protestant/non-denominational organizations, so there are certain parts of the books that should not be used in a Catholic Youth Ministry program. In addition, in my opinion, few of the Catholic youth ministry resources are particularly beneficial either. They frequently water down the faith, or use ascending Christology as a basis for all teaching:

**Ascending Christology** is how we learn of Christ in the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). Christ is first a human being like us in all things but sin, who lives a life of ministry, is crucified, dies, and is resurrected. This is fine, but should never take away from the divine nature of Jesus. **Descending Christology** is how we learn of Christ in John's Gospel. John stresses Jesus' heavenly origins and that He is the Word of God made flesh. Once again, care must also be taken that we do not overemphasize the divine without mentioning the human.

In order for a book to be named a "textbook" for Catholic schools and parishes, it must have an imprimatur stating that it is without doctrinal or moral error. In order for that to happen, it must be written from a descending Christology viewpoint. Moral truths come from God above, and not from an interpretation from an experience, a relationship with Jesus, or teaching from humanity. Therefore, textbooks make statements like, "It is true that...", and cannot make statements like, "The Church teaches that..."

Obviously, publishers want their books to have imprimaturs so that they can sell more books to schools and parishes. However, the Church has begun to hold more strictly to the requirements of what constitutes a Catholic textbook. Therefore, some publishers have decided to stop producing "textbooks" because most of what they teach comes from an ascending Christology standpoint, or has other larger problems. Rather than being forced to fix them, they simply market their books as "teacher resources".

With all that said, we are left with:

- Catholic textbooks that are typically difficult to use with young people in a non-classroom setting, and not written with youth ministry in mind.
- Catholic "resources" that have not met any scrutiny from the Church for what is being taught, and don't typically offer a very balanced ecclesiology.
- Protestant/non-denominational books that may have some wonderful chapters, followed by chapters that need to be completely ignored.



That is why my advice is for you to create your own teaching resources. Use Catholic textbooks for the basis of your teaching, but then supplement the information with activities, discussions, or ideas from other Catholic and Protestant youth ministry books and resources. The Combined Resource List in the back of this manual should be a great place to start.

## Retreats and Conferences Summary

There is a lot of confusion about the many retreats and conferences that are available for Coordinators of Youth Ministry and young people across the country. Below is a summary of the many opportunities that are available each year along with an editorial on each by Kevin Bohli.

I would recommend that each Coordinator of Youth Ministry and youth ministry volunteer attend at least one conference and one spiritual retreat every year. You should speak with your pastors about paying for these activities out of the youth ministry budget.

### Youth Ministry Conferences for Adults

Conferences are a great opportunity to learn new ministry practices, to spend time with thousands of other youth ministers who share your joys and struggles, and to make contacts with organizations, speakers, or performers from across the country. They also help to motivate you to become recommitted to your ministry and help prevent burnout.

- **Youth Specialties National Youth Workers Convention** – each year there are three of these conferences in the fall...one on the west coast, one in the Midwest, and one on the east coast. Go to [www.youthspecialties.com](http://www.youthspecialties.com) for more information and for this year's dates. Each conference consists of about 3000 youth workers from all Christian denominations. This conference is supposed to be “inter-denominational”, but you will find that Catholics are poorly represented when it comes to the entertainment, speakers, and resources. The talks and resources are excellent training on the basics of youth ministry, and in identifying the behavior of adolescents today, but everything must be taken with a “grain of salt” and you need to modify what you hear to apply the practices and ideas in your Catholic youth program. Cost for the 4 day conference is about \$300 plus transportation, lodging, and meals. I would recommend that if you have never been to one of these, it is worth experiencing at least once.
- **Steubenville Adult Conferences** – The Franciscan University of Steubenville offers a variety of summer conferences for adults. There is a Defending the Faith conference, an Applied Biblical Studies conference, and John Bosco Conference (for Catechists and Youth Ministers) to name a few... go to [www.franciscanconferences.com](http://www.franciscanconferences.com) to get a complete list. They are a mixture of a conference and a retreat with a variety of talks, prayer experiences, and opportunity for receiving the sacraments. I find Steubenville Conferences to be orthodox in their teaching and a good balance of catechesis with charismatic music and Masses. Cost is about \$260 for conference, meals, and lodging.
- **National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry (NCCYM)** – This conference is offered in the winter in the even numbered years by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry ([www.NFCYM.org](http://www.NFCYM.org)). This is a Catholic version of the Youth Specialties conference discussed above. After the poor experience of the conference in Las Vegas in 2006 by twenty five Arlington CYMs, there has been little interest in returning.

### Retreats for Youth Ministers

An annual spiritual retreat is vital to your ability to minister to young people. If you are not deeply rooted in prayer and find strength in your relationship with God, then you will not be successful in encouraging young people to do the same. You may get teens to follow you, but you will not be getting them to follow Christ.

- **Arlington Diocese Youth Ministry Retreat** –A two day retreat in the late winter to give the Coordinators of Youth Ministry and their volunteers quiet time to spend listening to the Lord’s call in their lives and an opportunity to make resolutions to focus their lives on that call. Of course you cannot get a group of youth ministers together for two days without having a ton of laughs and good community building. Cost will always be minimal to keep money from prohibiting you to attend.
- **Other retreats** – There are other religious orders in the area that offer retreats for all Catholic men and women. Some of these retreats are guided, and some are just quiet weekend getaways. Personally, I think that you should look for guided retreats to help motivate your thoughts and reflections. I also think that a retreat designed for youth ministers provides certain benefits that you would not see at a generic retreat for all Catholic men and women. However, any time alone with God is well worth it!

### Conferences for Youth

Conferences are a great opportunity for your young people to see that the Catholic Church is larger than just your parish or the Arlington diocese.

- **Steubenville Summer Youth Conferences** – The Franciscan University of Steubenville offers several three-day summer conferences for young people at their main campus in Ohio, and also has them located at various areas around the country. Go to [www.franciscanyouth.com](http://www.franciscanyouth.com) for a complete list. They often have a great lineup of speakers, are heavy on the praise and worship music, and place a strong emphasis on Mass and the Eucharist. The Arlington diocese sponsors a trip to this conference each summer. Cost is approximately **\$240** per youth which includes transportation.
- **World Youth Day** – Every two to three years, the Vatican calls for a World Youth Day celebration. This is a world-wide gathering of young Catholics to celebrate their common faith. The Office of Youth Ministry organizes a pilgrimage to this event, but parishes are free to organize their own separate trips. The great part about this event is that the young people get to experience the Catholic Church on the international level and meet youth from all over the world (and hopefully go to Mass with the Pope!). The bad part is that it is difficult to keep 16-18 year olds focused on the true spirit of pilgrimage in the midst of a carnival atmosphere, intense heat, long walks, and huge crowds.
- **National Catholic Youth Convention** – The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry offers this convention during the fall of the odd numbered years. The conference consists of 20,000 Catholic young people gathering in a stadium twice a day for prayer, music, and nationally known Catholic speakers. There are breakout sessions throughout the conference for other speakers, and there is a hall filled with vendors, organizations, and religious orders. The main concern with this conference is that it is expensive to attend

(around \$800 with transportation), and the young people will have to take 1-2 days off of school to attend. The young people that attended from Arlington in the past enjoyed themselves, but it was not a particularly educational or spiritual experience.

### Retreats for Young People

Listed below are several retreat opportunities for your young people, but I would not substitute them for an annual weekend retreat for just the young people of your parish. These larger retreats may each serve a need for your parish, but are not as effective in bringing your young people into a cohesive community or in stimulating a conversion in their lives. If you have questions about how to lead a retreat for your youth, be sure to contact the Office of Youth Ministry.

- **Mount 2000 and Beyond** – A weekend Eucharistic retreat at Mount St. Mary’s College and Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD. This retreat for 1500 young people has been known to fill up early, so be sure to check their website in September of each year to find the dates for registration ([www.mount2000andbeyond.com/](http://www.mount2000andbeyond.com/)). Cost is typically \$35 per student which includes meals and housing. This retreat consists of many hours of Eucharistic adoration, and has a large emphasis on chastity. This is more of a conference than a retreat, and the huge number of young people makes it very difficult to keep track of the ones that you bring. I wish that the organizers would reserve Eucharistic Adoration for special times throughout the weekend. In my opinion, having Jesus exposed for the entire time does not teach the young people to have a special reverence for Eucharistic adoration.
- **YOUTH 2000, Teens Encounter Christ (TEC), Youth Encounter, SEARCH** – These are all retreat programs that you may or may not be familiar with. Each is an organization that looks for volunteers to run these retreats on a regular basis within the diocese. Each has its good points and bad points. I believe that none of these organizations can run a retreat that is ideal for all of the youth of your parish, and that is why I have not initiated any of these programs on a regular basis in the Arlington Diocese. I think that it is up to each of you to plan retreats that meet the current needs of your program. I am also a proponent of single-sex retreats and would be happy to discuss my reasoning with you.



## Youth Ministry Certification

All Coordinators of Youth Ministry in the Arlington Diocese should pursue certification within their first three years of ministry. There are several different options available across the country to be certified. Life Teen and the Center for Ministry Development (CMD) both offer programs. However, the Arlington diocese has now created our own nationally recognized certification program that is accredited through the Franciscan University of Steubenville. This program is funded by the *Rooted in Faith Forward in Hope* endowment. A list of courses can be found on our website ([www.arlingtondiocese.org/youth](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/youth)) and is outlined below:

**Two-year Youth Ministry Certificate Program** offered thru the Diocese of Arlington and Franciscan University. This two-year program includes 26 courses, each about 90 minutes.

### Year 1 Courses include:

- Jesus, Incarnate Love
- The Mission of the Church
- A Vision of Effective Youth Ministry
- Mary, Model of Prayer
- The Church, the Body of Christ
- The Father's Plan for Salvation
- Jesus, Master of Disciples
- Jesus and the Apostles
- Jesus, Model of Evangelization
- Holy Spirit, Converter of Hearts
- Jesus, in the World, but not of the World
- Methods and Practical Skills
- Jesus, Fullness of Revelation

### Year 2 Courses include:

- John Paul II and the New Evangelization
- Teaching Catholic Sexuality
- Effective Catechesis in a Youth Ministry Setting
- The Christocentricity of Catholic Morality
- The Liturgical Mission of the Church
- Moving from Evangelization to Catechesis
- John Paul II's Understanding of the Family
- Theology of the Body
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Mobilizing Teens for Service, Leadership and Vocation
- General Introduction to Adolescent Development
- Counseling Teens in Crisis Situations
- Jesus, Source of Life and Freedom

## Opportunities for Continuing Education

Below are a few of the local opportunities that you have to take courses for further formation, or to receive a degree:

### **Catholic Distance University**

120 East Colonial Highway  
Hamilton, Virginia 20158-9012

CDU offers you the flexibility of enrolling in one of our diploma programs (e.g., Master of Arts, Catechetical Diploma), or just an individual course, as well as taking courses for credit or noncredit. (540) 338-2700

<http://www.cdu.edu/contactus.asp>

### **The Catholic University of America**

School of Theology and Religious Studies

Caldwell Hall

The Catholic University of America

Washington, DC 20064

202-319-5683

To help realize the mission of the university, the School of Theology and Religious Studies sets itself two goals, namely, to promote excellence in teaching, research, and publication in the area of theology and religious studies, and to provide the professional training of lay and clerical leaders who will serve the Roman Catholic community in the United States and throughout the world.

<http://religiousstudies.cua.edu/contactus.cfm>

(Inside Scoop? Contact Bill Gavin at 703-978-4141)

### **Notre Dame Graduate School**

Of Christendom College

Graduate School Campus

4407 Sano Street

Alexandria, VA 22312

703-658-4304 phone

The purpose of both the Theology Core Program and the Systematic Theology Concentration is to assist students in acquiring an understanding of the Faith as transmitted by the Apostles, and a theological interpretation of the Creed as expressed by the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

### **John Paul II Institute** for Studies on Marriage and Family at the Catholic University of America

415 Michigan Avenue, NE

Washington, DC 20017

202-526-3799

In particular, the M.T.S. degree provides a background in the specific theological disciplines related to Christian anthropology, ethics and faith in society. Therefore, the program prepares the graduate to begin academic research and teaching and professional work in which skills of this sort are required or useful, including religious education, campus ministry and diocesan work in the area of marriage and family life.

**Franciscan University of Steubenville Distance Learning Program**

1235 University Blvd.  
Steubenville, OH 43952  
1800 466 8336

Our Theology program strives to enable all students to deepen their understanding of Christian revelation and tradition from a Catholic viewpoint. As an academic discipline, our Theology program — and the distinguished faculty who teach it — challenges the mind to explore the many dimensions of Christianity. Theology is defined as “faith seeking understanding.” Therefore the study of theology is an integral part of every student’s core curriculum at Franciscan University

[www.franciscan.edu](http://www.franciscan.edu)

(Inside scoop? Contact Kevin Bohli at 703 841 2559)

**The Dominican House of Studies**

487 Michigan Avenue, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20017-1585  
Tel: 202-529-5300

Our program of studies is designed to provide a solid foundation and training for both the ordained and non-ordained ministries in the Church through courses based on the comprehensive theological approach of St. Thomas Aquinas. Keeping a focus on the preparation of our Dominican students for ministry in our Province, the Pontifical Faculty invites all who are interested in church ministry and personal spiritual growth to participate in our Thomistic program of studies through the M.A. M.Div., S.T.B., and S.T.L. degree programs.



SECONDARY RELIGION GUIDELINES

DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

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**1998**

WORKING DRAFT

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**“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations....  
Teaching them to carry out everything I have commanded you.”  
(Matthew 28:19-20)**

Catholic education refers to the totality of the Church’s efforts to make disciples, to help all believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in His Name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, in order to build up the Body of Christ. (cf. CCC 4)

An integral part of Catholic Education is catechesis. “Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of the Christian life.” (CCC 5)

The following Guidelines for Secondary Religious Education are structured around a center, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and of Christ as expressed in the four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

1. The Profession of Faith – Creed
2. The Celebration of the Christian Mystery – Sacraments
3. Life in Christ – Commandments and the Moral Life
4. Christian Prayer – Prayer

The Guidelines, which are cross-referenced with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, are structured to be useful for both Parish Religious Education Programs and Parish School Programs. There are two major sections:

CONTENT OF FAITH:

- I. Topical Themes – content is arranged according to major textbook series themes, and is designed to be more useful for Catholic high schools;
- II. Themes by Age Group – content is identical to Section I but arranged according to content to be presented to the younger or the older adolescent, and is designed to be more useful for Parish Religious Education and Youth Ministry Programs;
- III. Glossary – frequently used terms and brief definitions or descriptions

EXPERIENCE OF FAITH:

- IV. Books, Resources, Videos, Service, Activities, Projects, and Retreats – suggestions to enrich the experience of faith

These Guidelines are a working draft for the 1998-99 school year, and those who use them will be invited to contribute suggestions in the Spring of 1999. These Guidelines are intended to assist catechists in fulfilling the mission of the Church to educate her children in the fullness of the Catholic Faith: to believe what the Creed teaches; to participate in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church; to live a life of love for God and neighbor; and to pray to the Father through Jesus, His Son, in the Holy Spirit.

**CONTENT OF FAITH:**

**SECTION II**

**THEMES BY AGE GROUPS**

RELIGION GUIDELINES REVISION  
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION  
THEMES BY AGE GROUP

I. FAITH THEMES FOR YOUNGER ADOLESCENTS

A. The Profession of Faith

1. Catholic Beliefs

- a. The desire for God is written on the heart of every human person, for we were created by God and for God; God continually draws us to Himself [CCC 27]. The search for God begins with the ultimate questions about human existence. These questions have led to the discovery of God through the things He has made (cf. Rom. 1:19-20; Acts 14:15, 17; 17:27-28; Wis. 13:1-9).
- b. By natural reason, we can come to know that God exists. But God wants us to participate in His own life. We cannot know this by natural reason alone; therefore God, through an utterly free decision, has revealed Himself and given Himself to us [CCC 50]. God willed to adopt us as His children and so make us capable of knowing and loving Him beyond our natural capacity (1 Tim. 6:16; Eph. 1:4-5).
- c. Faith makes us able to respond to God's revelation. Faith is that supernatural gift by which we believe God and entrust ourselves to Him. This faith needs to be nourished and developed throughout our lives. By faith, we also accept what God has revealed to us. The faith of the Church is summarized in the Creed.
  - i. We profess our belief in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. The Book of Genesis presents the unique revelation concerning the origins of the universe.
    - (a) This revelation teaches that God created the universe out of nothing according to His wisdom by an act of His will [CCC 295]. Essential to the Genesis account (Gen. 1-2) is its emphasis on the goodness of creation (Gen. 1:4). At the same time, the creation story reveals God's own goodness and unfathomable love.
    - (b) The Book of Genesis also presents the unique revelation concerning the origin and dignity of the human person. Man is created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27), capable of self-knowledge, self-possession and of freely giving himself to another person in love [CCC 357]. God creates every human

person: the soul directly, the body indirectly through the cooperation of one's parents.

- ii. We also profess our belief in one God (Dt. 6:4-5). This one God is a Trinity of Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, eternally sharing one divine nature. This is the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

## 2. The Holy Trinity

- a. In the Old Testament, God reveals Himself as the one true God. He is the creator of all and transcends all. Jesus was sent by the Father for our salvation and to reveal God's inner life--the mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- b. Christians are baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19). "Name" is used in the singular to indicate that there is only one God, but three Persons in God. [CCC 233]
- c. The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian faith and life. The history of salvation is identical with the way in which the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals Himself to us and reconciles us to Himself. [CCC 234]
- d. The Trinity is a mystery of faith--human reason alone could never have known that there are three Persons in one God unless He Himself revealed His inner life to us. [CCC 237]
  - i. Many religions invoke God as "Father." In the Old Testament, God is called "Father" because of His work of creation, and because He gave the covenant and the Law to Israel. [CCC 238]
  - ii. Jesus reveals God as Father in a unique sense: God is Father not only in relation to creation; He is eternally Father by His relationship to Jesus His Son (cf. Mt. 11:27). Jesus is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father: "God from God, light from light, true God from true God." [CCC 242]
  - iii. Jesus also reveals the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will remain with the disciples to teach them and guide them (Jn. 14:17, 26; 16:13). The Holy Spirit is sent to the Apostles and to the Church both by the Father and by the Son. [CCC 244] In the Creed, we profess our faith in the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son."

- e. The revelation of the Triune God has as its end the participation of all persons in the life of the Trinity (cf. Jn. 17:21-23). God put us in the world to know, love and serve Him and so enter into paradise to share the joy of Trinitarian life. [CCC 1721] Even now, however, we are called to be a dwelling for the Holy Trinity (Jn. 14:23).
  - i. We participate in the life of God through grace. Grace introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: we are made adopted children of God, able to call Him “Father” in union with Jesus, the Son, and we receive the life of the Spirit (cf. Jn. 1:12-18; 17:3; Rom. 8:14-17; 2 Pt. 1:3-4). [CCC 1997]
  - ii. This invitation to participate in the life of God through grace is a supernatural gift, depending entirely on God’s initiative. [CCC 1998; cf. 1 Cor. 2:7-9] Our response to this loving offer should be the surrender of self in faith [CCC 142-143, 1102, 2087, 2002]
  - iii. The response of faith we give to God is celebrated in the Church’s liturgy, expressed in our moral life, and nourished by prayer and growth in the spiritual life.

### 3. Jesus Christ

- a. The New Testament finds its origin in God’s definitive self-revelation in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of His Son, Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 1:1-2).
- b. Jesus Christ is both truly God and truly man. This mystery is called the Hypostatic Union [CCC 464-469]. Jesus was conceived and born of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 1:34-35).
  - i. God chose Mary, a young Jewish maiden, to be the Mother of His Son. Because of her unique role in salvation history, Mary was preserved free from all stain of original sin. This privilege is called the Immaculate Conception [CCC 490-493]. Mary was also preserved from all personal sin because of her fullness of grace (cf. Lk. 1:28).
  - ii. Mary conceived and gave birth to Jesus as a virgin and remained a virgin always. Mary is a model of faith, loving obedience to God, generosity and purity. Virgin and mother, Mary is the symbol and perfect realization of the Church [CCC 507].
- c. Jesus is the definitive sign of the Father’s unconditional love for each and every human being. Jesus’ life and teachings, recorded in the four Gospels, reveal this love of God for us.

- i. At the heart of Jesus' message is the teaching on conversion. Conversion entails repentance and rejection of one's past sins as a result of turning one's heart and mind to Jesus (cf. Mk. 1:14-15). Conversion ultimately demands a redirection of one's life according to the demands of the Gospel.
  - ii. Repentance and conversion lead to entry into the Kingdom of God. This messianic kingdom is intended for all people. The kingdom is established by Jesus through His words, deeds and His own person [CCC 542]. Through various parables, Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God, its establishment, growth, how one enters it, and the presence of God's saving power in it [CCC 546].
  - iii. The Beatitudes reveal the qualities which characterize true membership in the Kingdom of God (Mt. 5:1-12). These qualities of the Christian life go beyond the demands of the Law and are a powerful sign of the presence of Christ [CCC 1716-1717].
- d. Jesus' earthly life was a life lived in giving thanks and praise to God the Father, culminating in the full sacrifice of His life on Calvary.
- i. The people of Israel over time came to expect a deliverer, the Messiah promised by God. Many of the expectations related to the Messiah are developed by the prophets. The most prominent are: the figure of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah (cf. Is. 52:13-53:12) and the Son of Man in Daniel (cf. Dan. 7:14).
  - ii. Gradually in the course of His public ministry, Jesus revealed the purpose of His coming: to save us all from our sins by the free offering of His life in His passion, death and resurrection (Jn. 12:27; 18:11; Lk. 3:21; 1 Jn. 2:2) [CCC 606-607]. The supreme example of love is Jesus' willingness to give His life out of love for His Father and for us [CCC 609]. This self-giving is given supreme expression in the Eucharist [CCC 610-611].
    - (a) In dying, Jesus atoned for the sins of mankind, thus destroying the power of sin and death forever (cf. Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:14) [CCC 615].
    - (b) By rising to a new life, Jesus restores our supernatural life. The resurrection completes the victory over sin and death (1 Pt. 2:21) [CCC 618, 654]. By ascending into heaven, Jesus goes before us into the fullness of God's Kingdom and intercedes for us with His Father.

- e. In Christ, God has reconciled the world to Himself and has provided us with the means (grace) to overcome whatever obstacles prevent us from living in a greater freedom and friendship with God. Salvation comes to us through a real but mysterious participation in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, communicated to us above all through the sacraments of the Church.
  - i. The sacraments of initiation are Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. These are the sacraments which together form the basis of every Catholic's life, enabling him or her to live a mature life of faith, witness and service in the world.
  - ii. Other sacraments enable a person to grow in holiness and bear witness to Christ according to a specific vocation and way of life. These sacraments of service to the Church and to the world are Matrimony and Holy Orders.
  - iii. The sacraments of healing are Penance and Anointing of the Sick. These help reconcile us to God and provide spiritual and physical healing when a person is faced with illness.
- f. During His life on earth, Jesus called people to follow Him in faith as disciples. He continues to invite all humanity to conform their lives to Him and to spread the Gospel. As followers of Jesus, we are to love God above all things and to love our neighbors as Jesus has loved each and every one of us (cf. Jn. 15:12; 13:34). [CCC 1970]
  - i. For a Catholic, discipleship means following Christ unconditionally; this involves carrying one's cross (Mt. 16:24), and putting on the mind and heart of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:17-24). The Sermon on the Mount, especially the Beatitudes, and the last discourse of Christ at the Last Supper (Jn. 14-18) are ideal examples of the Lord's way of life.
  - ii. Those who fulfill the will of God and keep His commandments will be rewarded with eternal happiness in heaven; those who deliberately reject God's will and commands will lose the Kingdom of God forever and suffer the damnation of hell. [CCC 1020-1037]
  - iii. To communicate His gifts of salvation to all the world, Christ sent the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, enabling them to go and teach all nations as Jesus Himself had commanded (Mt. 28:19-20). The Holy Spirit dwells in and works through the Church, and is the source and guarantee of her truth, life and holiness. The same Spirit enters the hearts of the faithful at baptism, continuing to mold and shape the believer through the sacraments and other divine gifts. [CCC 683, 768]

4. The Church

- a. The Church, founded by Christ, has its origins in His death and resurrection. It is the new People of God, prepared for in the Old Testament and given life, growth and direction by Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is the work of God's saving love in Jesus Christ. [CCC 759, 766-768]
  - i. In the Old Testament, a new people is formed by the word of God which first came to Abraham. A series of covenants, culminating in the covenant of Mt. Sinai, formed and guided this people, Israel. [CCC 762]
  - ii. Despite many infidelities to the covenant, and through hardships and trials, God led His people, always guiding them towards the fulfillment of the promise of salvation.
  - iii. Salvation comes to all mankind in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made man. Jesus called the people to believe in Him and His Father who sent Him. He inaugurated His Church by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the Kingdom promised throughout the Scriptures. The Church is the Kingdom of God already present in mystery. [CCC 764, 541]
  - iv. In the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Church comes to birth. The Church is the New Israel established in the New Covenant of Christ's blood. [CCC 766]
- b. After His ascension into Heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the Virgin Mary at Pentecost. The Church was publicly displayed to all nations and the work of spreading the Gospel was begun. [CCC 767]
- c. The Church is both a spiritual community, held together by bonds of faith, hope and charity, and a visible society, with a history that grows and develops through the centuries. [CCC 771]
  - i. The Church in the Apostolic Age
    - (a) On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles, enabling them to go out and teach all nations as Jesus had commanded. This universal mission of salvation belongs to the essence of the Church.
    - (b) The central teaching of the Apostles, in their witness to Christ, the Risen Lord, was repentance and baptism. The early Church community was characterized by their faith in Christ, their spirit of fraternal charity, their devotion to the Apostles' teaching, and

to prayer, especially the celebration of the Lord's Supper (the breaking of bread; cf. Acts 2:42-47).

- (c) From Jerusalem, the Church sent missionaries into other cities of Palestine and ultimately throughout the known world. The two most important figures in the Apostolic Age were St. Peter and St. Paul. St. Peter received a unique mission from Christ to be the chief of the Apostles and the visible head of the Church on earth. [CCC 881; Mt. 16:18-19] The Pope is the successor of Peter; he is the chief shepherd and teacher of all the faithful. [CCC 882] St. Paul became an outstanding witness to Christ in his missionary journeys and writings after his conversion (cf. Acts 9:1-19; Gal. 1:11-24). Both Peter and Paul, as well as the other Apostles, left successors to carry on the task of sanctifying, teaching and governing the churches they had established. These successors are the bishops [CCC 880]. Priests and deacons also emerged as assistants to the mission of the bishops.
  - (d) The early Church began in thoroughly Jewish surroundings and spread in a world of Greek thought under Roman political authority. The Church had to find ways of preaching the message of Christ such that the people of that time would understand. There was then and is in every age a constant struggle to maintain the integrity of the Gospel without compromising it with the prevailing thoughts and customs of the time. The fidelity of the Church to her mission and message is guaranteed by the gift of the Holy Spirit through the charism of infallibility. [CCC 785, 889-892]
- ii. The First Centuries
- (a) Periodic persecutions of the Church occurred at various times during the first three centuries. Many of the men and women whom we honor as saints were martyred in these persecutions.
  - (b) The Church expanded greatly during these centuries. In the course of time, various conflicts and disputes arose over issues of doctrine and practice. Several of the most important disputes were concerned with the person of Christ, the relationship of His divinity and humanity, the maternity of the Blessed Mother, and the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

- (c) These disputes were often resolved at special gatherings of the bishops known as ecumenical councils. These councils make decisions concerning the doctrine and life of the Church which, once confirmed by the Pope, are binding on the faithful. Doctrinal formulas solemnly defined by ecumenical councils are infallible statements of the Church's teaching authority (the Magisterium) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [CCC 891] The Creed which we profess at Mass was formulated by the first ecumenical council, the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) and later expanded by the Third Council of Constantinople (681 A.D.). The Creed summarizes the central teachings of our faith.
- (d) The early centuries of the Church's history are marked by a great richness in writings by Christians, many of whom are saints, who lived in both the Eastern and Western parts of the Roman Empire. Another remarkable development was the growth of monasticism, in which both men and women chose to leave the world and follow Christ in poverty, chastity and obedience. The monastic life and practices continue to flourish today in religious communities of men and women (priests, brothers, and sisters).

iii. The Middle Ages

- (a) During the first period of the Middle Ages (c. 600-800 A.D.), the Church was involved in great missionary efforts. With the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Church helped to preserve the culture and learning of the past. Monasteries and religious communities played a very important part in handing on the Christian and secular heritage.
- (b) During the second period of the Middle Ages (c. 800-1050 A.D.), the Church and the State became practically intertwined. Although medieval society was rooted in the Catholic Faith, the entanglement between Church and State would ultimately prove detrimental to the Church's unique mission. Also at this time, tension between the East and the West led to a break (schism) between these two parts of the Church. Theological and political differences on both sides caused this division between Roman Catholics and the Orthodox, a division which unfortunately exists still today.
- (c) During the third period of the Middle Ages (1050-1300 A.D.), the Church experienced the beginnings of a rebirth. The Papacy grew in its influence; art, architecture and intellectual inquiry

flourished.

- (d) During the fourth period of the Middle Ages (1300-1500 A.D.), the Papacy was moved from Rome to Avignon and then back to Rome. It was during this period that a schism arose in the Papacy. Throughout the Middle Ages, the holiness of the Church continued to be manifested in men and women of great sanctity. A number of new religious orders were also founded.

iv. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation

- (a) During the period of the Middle Ages and into the 1500's there was, on the part of some Popes and bishops in these times, excessive involvement in temporal affairs. Such involvement created a climate of discontent among the people and certain religious figures called for reform within the Church. Some temporal rulers took advantage of this decline to enhance their own temporal power.
- (b) Eventually some of these religious and temporal leaders broke away from the Church and carried out their reforms by establishing their own churches. This movement is known as the Protestant Reformation.
- (c) Other leaders who had been calling for reform remained faithful to the Church and worked to bring about reform from within. After a time, the bishops gathered at the Council of Trent (1545-1563) in order to renew the life of the Church. The Council promulgated many important reforms in the discipline of the Church, sought to correct abuses that had crept into the Church, and more clearly defined certain Catholic beliefs that had been called into question or denied by the Protestant Reformers.
- (d) The period following the Council is known as the Counter-Reformation. It was a time of the founding of new religious orders, the reform of older religious orders, and a reawakening in missionary activity. Yet the reforms of Trent were implemented very slowly in certain European countries. In general, the split in Christianity which occurred in this period of history had the effect of weakening the role and influence of religion in temporal affairs and public life.

v. The Modern Era

- (a) Philosophical, political and social changes have tended to characterize the modern era. There have been massive changes

in nearly all institutions in Western society and thought. During this period, the Church lost almost all her temporal power, yet at the same time, grew in the consciousness of her spiritual mission.

- (b) The Industrial Revolution of this period saw workers in many countries treated unjustly and denied basic rights. The Church began to develop a body of social teaching aimed at securing recognition and protection of all peoples' human dignity and rights. The Church, through her social doctrine, proclaims that everyone is subject to the moral law.
  - (c) From 1869-1870, the bishops of the Church met at the First Vatican Council. The Council solemnly defined the infallibility of the Pope, and solemnly asserted that faith and reason could not contradict one another, since both have their source in God, who is Truth Itself. [CCC 159]
  - (d) The modern era has seen the destruction caused by wars and violence. The Popes of this period called all people to seek peace and reject war as a solution to conflict. Two important dogmas concerning Mary were defined in this period: her Immaculate Conception (by Pope Pius IX in 1854) and her bodily Assumption (by Pope Pius XII in 1950).
  - (e) From 1962-1965, the Second Vatican Council was called, in order to find ways of preaching and applying the Gospel message in the contemporary world. Vatican II was essentially a pastoral council which was intended not only to invigorate the life of the Church where she had been established for a long time, but also to better equip her for her missionary activities in bringing the saving Gospel to all peoples of the earth. At the same time, the council prepared the Church to make a greater contribution to temporal peace and prosperity. Today, Pope John Paul II has made the teachings and implementation of Vatican II the foundation for his own papacy.
- d. The Church has been described by many images drawn from Scripture:
- i. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. Christ is the head who joins to Himself the members of His Body through baptism and other spiritual bonds. [CCC 787-795] Those belong fully to the Mystical Body who are united by the bonds of grace, faith, government and sacraments.
  - ii. The Church is the People of God. This People is called by God, redeemed by Christ and united in the Holy Spirit. [CCC 781-782] As the

new People of God, all members of the Church share in the priestly, kingly, and prophetic mission of Christ [CCC 783-786]

- (a) The priesthood of the laity is exercised through the offering of spiritual sacrifices, whereby their whole lives become a fitting sacrifice of praise. We are given a share in Christ's priesthood by baptism. Through the ministerial priesthood, which is essentially different from the priesthood of the laity, Christ perpetuates His saving actions in the Church. The ministerial priest acts in the person of Christ when administering the sacraments.
  - (b) All members of the Church participate in the kingly office of Christ by overcoming the reign of sin in their own lives and by refashioning the temporal order in the light of the teachings of Christ. The People of God fulfill its royal dignity by a life in keeping with its vocation to serve with Christ.
  - (c) All members of the Church are called to be witnesses of Christ through the testimony of their lives and by proclaiming the Gospel in accord with their state in life. Thus they fulfill their prophetic office.
- iii. The Church is like a sacrament: a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people. [CCC 775]
- (a) The Church is a visible institution whose purpose is to bring salvation to all the world. This salvation is brought about by the proclamation of the Gospel and by our participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ through the sacraments.
  - (b) Christ has entrusted His Church with the mission of teaching, governing and sanctifying. He promised that His Spirit would guide the Church in this work.
  - (c) This Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic. [CCC 813-870] In the Church, the fullness of God's revelation, saving truth and sanctifying grace resides. Some elements of truth and sanctification can exist outside of the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church. Since these gifts belong to the Church of Christ they are forces impelling toward Catholic unity
    - (i) These realities are found in other Christian churches even though they are not in full communion with the Catholic Church [cf. CCC 818-819] The Church prays and works

for the unity of all Christians [CCC 821-822]

- (ii) With regard to other religions of the world, the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. Faithful to her mission, however, she continues to proclaim Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life (Jn. 14:6). [CCC 839-845] All of humanity is called to be gathered together and reunited in the Church of Jesus Christ [CCC 845]
- e. In any consideration of the Church, Mary, the Mother of God, is important. She holds a pre-eminent place as the Mother of Christ and of all believers. She is the type and model of the Church in her charity, faith and union with Jesus [CCC 963, 967]
  - i. Like the Church, Mary is both Virgin and Mother. She conceived and brought forth the Lord while remaining a virgin. [CCC 496-507] The Church as a mother, in word and sacrament, brings forth and nourishes new children of God. As virgin, the Church pledges herself to the Lord, who is the sole source of her life and fruitfulness.
  - ii. The Church finds her perfection in Mary who was assumed body and soul into heaven. Mary stands as a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God. [CCC 972]
  - iii. The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is intrinsic to Christian worship. [CCC 971] Mary has been and will continue to be honored through prayer and devotion by those who believe in her Son.
- B. The Sacraments of Faith
  - 1. Sacraments
    - a. God calls all people to an ever-deeper sharing in His life which begins in Baptism and continues to grow through many channels of grace, including the sacraments, prayer, and good works.
    - b. The whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments [CCC 1113]. The seven sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony) touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life [CCC 1210].

## Section II

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- c. Each sacrament is an efficacious sign made up of actions and words which signify and effect the particular grace conferred through it. Sacraments confer their grace through the power of God and are limited in their effectiveness only by the disposition of those who receive them [CCC 1127-1128]. The sacramental sign is included within a rite which contains other symbols related to the meaning of the sacrament as well.
- d. A sacramental celebration is woven from signs and symbols. In keeping with the divine pedagogy of salvation, their meaning is rooted in the work of creation and in human culture, specified by the events of the Old Covenant and fully revealed in the person and work of Christ. [CCC 1145]
  - i. A sacramental celebration is a meeting of God's children with their Father, in Christ and the Holy Spirit; this meeting takes the form of a dialogue, through actions and words. [CCC 1153]
  - ii. The liturgical word and action are inseparable both insofar as they are signs and instruction and insofar as they accomplish what they signify. [CCC 1155]
- e. The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments are necessary for salvation. The fruit of sacramental life is both personal--the Spirit makes us sharers in the divine nature (cf. 2 Pt. 1:4), and ecclesial--it is an increase in charity and in the Church's mission of witness. [CCC 1134]

### 2. The Church as Sacrament

- a. The Church is a kind of sacrament. The Church is both a visible organization and a spiritual community. She is one, yet formed of two components, human and divine. [CCC 779]
  - i. A sacrament is a visible sign of God's saving presence through which He communicates His divine life. The Church is a sign of union between God and His people, and at the same time brings about this union. The unity of the human family is restored in Christ and the Church. [CCC 774-775]
  - ii. We become sharers in Christ's life through our participation in His Paschal Mystery. The seven sacraments of the Church are the means through which we enter into and participate in the Paschal Mystery. [CCC 1085, 1067]
- b. The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. Christ is the Head who joins to Himself the members of His Body through baptism and the Eucharist and other spiritual bonds. [CCC 790, 794]

- c. Those who belong to the Mystical Body of Christ are united by bonds of grace, faith, government and the sacraments.
- d. The Church is the People of God, called by the Father, redeemed by Christ, united in the Holy Spirit. We become members of God's people by being reborn in a new birth of water and the Holy Spirit--that is, by faith in Christ and Baptism (cf. Jn. 3:3-5). [CCC 782] As the new People of God, all members of the Church share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. [CCC 783-786]
- e. The Church was instituted by Christ to bring His salvation to all the world. Christ Jesus is the mediator and way of salvation, who is present in His Body, the Church. Thus, the Church is necessary for salvation. [CCC 846-848] The Church communicates the life, truth and holiness of Jesus through her preaching, her works of charity and service, and her celebration of the liturgy and the sacraments.

### 3. The Church Year

- a. Christian liturgy not only recalls the events that saved us but actualizes them, makes them present. The Paschal Mystery of Christ is celebrated, not repeated. [CCC 1104] In the liturgy, God is glorified, and we are sanctified.
- b. The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which her power flows. [CCC 1074] For this reason, every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of His Body, the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. The liturgy makes the Church present and manifests her as the visible sign of the communion in Christ between God and mankind. It engages the faithful in the new life of the community and involves the conscious, active and fruitful participation of everyone. [CCC 1071]
- c. From ancient times the Church has gathered on the Lord's Day to celebrate the Paschal Mystery with Scripture readings and the Eucharist. Sunday is the preeminent day for the liturgical assembly [CCC 1167]. The Church requires the faithful to participate in the liturgy on the day recalling Christ's resurrection. [CCC 2042]
  - i. As time passed, various periods of the year were set aside to celebrate different aspects of the mystery of salvation in Christ. These periods are called liturgical seasons.
    - (a) The seasons of Advent and Lent are seasons of preparation. Advent prepares for the celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. Lent prepares for the celebration of the Paschal

Mystery, reflected in the Easter Triduum. The Easter season focuses on the Resurrection and culminates in the Ascension and Pentecost, which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the beginning of the universal mission of the Church. [Cf. CCC 1095, 1169, 1076]

- (b) The liturgical year outside of these special times is called Ordinary Time. During Ordinary Time, the Church continues to meditate upon the mystery of Christ and His teachings.
- ii. On certain Sundays and Holy Days, the Church celebrates solemn feasts of Jesus, Mary, and the saints. On certain weekdays, the Church honors particular saints. [CCC 1172-1173]
- d. In the celebration of the liturgy, Sacred Scripture is extremely important. From it come the lessons that are read and explained in the homily and the psalms that are sung. It is from the Scriptures that the prayers, collects and hymns draw their force, and that actions and signs derive their meaning. [CCC 1100]
  - i. The Holy Spirit first recalls the meaning of the salvation event to the liturgical assembly by giving life to the Word of God which is proclaimed so that it may be received and lived. [CCC 1100]
  - ii. By the saving Word of God, faith is nourished in the hearts of believers. The proclamation of this Word elicits the response of faith as consent and commitment. The Holy Spirit gives the grace of faith, strengthens it and makes it grow in the community. [CCC 1102]
  - iii. The liturgical word and action are inseparable. They both give instruction and accomplish what they signify. When the Holy Spirit awakens faith, He gives an understanding of the Word of God and through the sacraments makes present what the Word of God proclaims. The Spirit makes present and communicates the Father's work, fulfilled by the Son. [CCC 1155]
- C. The Life of Faith
  - 1. Life in the Spirit
    - a. The knowledge of Jesus as Lord is possible only in the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3; cf. Gal. 4:6): to be in touch with Christ, we must first have been touched by the Holy Spirit [CCC 683]. Through His grace, the Holy Spirit is the first to awaken faith in us and to communicate to us the new life, which consists in knowing God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ (cf. Jn. 17:3). [CCC 684]

- b. God is Love (1 Jn. 4:8, 16) and love is His first gift, poured into our hearts by the Spirit He has given us (Rom. 5:5). By this power of the Spirit, God's children can bear much fruit--the fruit of a new life in Christ. [CCC 733, 736, 740]

## 2. The Dignity of the Human Person

- a. The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen. 1:27). This divine image is present in every man. As creatures made in God's image and likeness, we possess the spiritual faculties of intellect and free will. By our reason, we are capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, we are capable of directing ourselves toward our true good. [CCC 1704]
- b. Freedom allows us to shape our own lives [CCC 1731] and to be responsible for our acts. [CCC 1734]
  - i. Our freedom is not absolute; it is limited and can be affected by various internal and external factors. [CCC 1739, 1735]
  - ii. The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. By deviating from the moral law, we violate our own freedom, disrupt our relations with our neighbors, and act against divine truth. [CCC 1740]
  - iii. We are aided in overcoming the limitations and obstacles to freedom. In Christ, God reconciled the world to Himself and ultimately provided mankind with the means (grace) to overcome these obstacles so as to live in a greater freedom and friendship with God. [Cf. CCC 1741-1742]
- c. Human dignity encompasses both our bodies and our souls (cf. Gen. 2:7). The human body shares in the dignity of the image of God. [CCC 364]

## 3. Morality and the Virtuous Life

- a. A virtue is a good habit, inclining a person to do what is good and right more easily (cf. Phil. 4:8). [CCC 1803]
- b. There are certain natural moral virtues which are acquired by human effort. Four of these virtues play a pivotal role and are called "cardinal virtues": prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance (cf. Wis. 8:7). [CCC 1804-1805]
- c. The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues, which adapt our natural faculties for participation in the divine nature. The three theological virtues are: faith, hope, and charity (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13). The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity. [CCC 1812-1813]

- d. The practice of the moral life should be animated by the virtues: we are called to pursue what is good and to choose what is good in all our concrete actions. The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God. [CCC 1803]

#### 4. Personal Growth

- a. The first and last point of reference for our moral life is always Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life (cf. Jn. 14:6). [CCC 1698]
- b. The person who believes in Christ becomes a child of God. This first adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness. Having matured in grace, the moral life reaches its perfection in eternal life in the glory of heaven. [CCC 1709]
- c. God put us into the world to know, to love, and to serve Him, and so come to paradise. This happiness that we are promised confronts us with decisive moral choices. It invites us to purify our hearts of bad instincts and to seek the love of God above all else. It teaches us that true happiness is not to be found in riches or well-being, in human fame or power, or in any human achievement, but in God alone, the source of every good and of all love. [CCC 1721, 1723]

#### 5. Relationships

- a. The human person needs to live in society. Through forming good relationships with others, we develop our potential and grow in our vocation. [Cf. CCC 1878]
- b. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion. [CCC 2347]
  - i. Friendship between persons should be marked by mutual respect, patience, understanding, and charity.
  - ii. Willingness to forgive one another is a demand of the Gospel. When friendships are damaged by sin, the persons involved need to seek reconciliation with each other and with God.
- c. Healthy relationships with others ought to be based on Catholic values. We are called to help one another grow in virtue and holiness by our words, actions, and example.

6. Sexuality

- a. Creating the human race in His own image, God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion. [CCC 2331] Sexuality is a good which affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. [CCC 2332] The physical, moral and spiritual difference and complementarity between man and woman are oriented towards the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. [CCC 2333]
  - i. Marriage and the family are at the root of every human society.
  - ii. Christian marriage is the union of a baptized man and woman who freely enter into a loving covenant with each other in Christ. The self-giving love of bride and bridegroom is sealed and strengthened by the Lord; the married couple imitates, and in a way represents, Christ's faithful love for His bride, the Church. Thus, husbands and wives become signs, in and to the world, of God's steadfast love for His people. [Cf. CCC 2335]
  - iii. Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman [CCC 2360]. This conjugal love has a twofold end: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life. These two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated without altering the couple's spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family. [CCC 2363]
- b. Sexuality is not something simply biological; it concerns the person as such. [cf. CCC 2361] In order to be truly human, sexuality must be integrated into the affective dimensions of the person.
  - i. Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person. [CCC 2337] Chastity includes self-mastery, a continuing effort to govern one's passions and act according to the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life. [CCC 2339, 2344]
  - ii. Chastity is a moral virtue, but it is also a gift from God. We need the graces of the sacraments, fidelity to prayer, and self-discipline in order to live a chaste life. All Christ's faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life. [CCC 2345, 2340, 2348]

7. Social Justice and Service

- a. Society is essential to the fulfillment of the human person's vocation. [CCC 1886] Every society should be established on the principles of respect for the rights and dignity of each person. The Church does not have a mission in the political, economic or social order; the purpose Christ assigned to it was a religious one. However this mission can be a source of commitment, direction and vigor to establish and consolidate human society according to the law of God.
  - i. The Church cannot be identified with any political system. At the same time, the Church is concerned for the total good of each person, since each person is called to salvation. [cf. CCC 2245, 2420]
  - ii. The Church urges each of her members to be committed to the transformation of society by the message of the Gospel. In her social teaching, the Church proposes principles for reflection; it provides criteria for judgment; it gives guidelines for action. [CCC 2423]
- b. Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow persons to obtain what is their due. Social justice can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of man. [CCC 1928-1929]
  - i. Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. The law of God obliges us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and to see in our neighbor the presence of Christ Himself (cf. Mt. 25:40).
  - ii. In light of the Church's understanding of her commitment to human welfare all Christians are encouraged to work for decisions in the political and economic arena that will safeguard the right of every person to human and civil culture in harmony with the dignity of the person, without distinction of race, sex, nation, religion or social circumstances.
  - iii. The Church is concerned not only with basic human necessities, but also with the spiritual rights and development of each person. [cf. CCC 1942] This defense of man's rights and freedom is based on the truest and deepest sense of what freedom means. In this regard, Christ reminds us of the interrelationship between freedom and truth: "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (Jn. 8:32). For every person, freedom means choosing in reason and in truth according to his own human dignity as created by the Father and redeemed by the Son.
- c. All people are called to respect the integrity of creation. Animals, plants, and inanimate beings are by nature destined for the common good of human

- persons (cf. Gen. 1:28-31). Yet man's dominion over the created world is not absolute; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation. [CCC 2415]
- i. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race (cf. Gen. 1:26-29). The right to private property does not do away with the original gift of the earth to the whole of mankind. [CCC 2402-2403]
  - ii. The ownership of any property makes its holder a steward of Providence, with the task of making it fruitful and communicating its benefits to others, first of all his family. Political authority has the right and duty to regulate the legitimate exercise of the right to ownership for the sake of the common good. [CCC 2404, 2406]
    - (a) The common good is the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.
    - (b) The common good presupposes respect for the person. Public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. [CCC 1907]
    - (c) The common good also requires the social well-being and development of the group itself. All people have a right to basic necessities of life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, etc. [CCC 1908]
    - (d) Finally, the common good requires peace, the stability and security of a just order. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective self-defense. [CCC 1909]
  - d. All persons should participate, each according to his own position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. [CCC 1913]
    - i. Participation begins by taking charge of the areas for which one has personal responsibility: one's work, one's family, one's education.
    - ii. Citizens are urged to participate as good and responsible citizens in the political life of their country. Included in this duty are the exercise of one's voting rights and (if one has the talent and desire) public office. Citizens should always strive to bring the light of the Gospel into the political arena. [cf. CCC 1915]

- e. Charity and love of neighbor urges us to be willing to serve one another as Christ came to serve, not to be served (cf. Mt. 20:28).

8. Grace as Gift

- a. Grace is first and foremost the gift of the Holy Spirit who justifies and sanctifies us. [CCC 2003] Grace is a free gift, a participation in the life of God, who invites us to share in His divine life.
- b. God's free initiative demands our free response. God has created us with freedom and the power to know Him and love Him. He has placed within us a longing for truth and goodness that only He can satisfy. The promises of eternal life respond to this desire. [CCC 2002]
  - i. The first work of the grace of the Holy Spirit is conversion, which brings about a detachment from sin and a purification of heart. This leads to justification, which is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. [CCC 1989-1990, 1992]
  - ii. Justification establishes a cooperation between God's grace and our freedom. We assent in faith to the Word of God which invites us to conversion, and we cooperate in charity with the Holy Spirit. [CCC 1993]
- c. The moral law is a work of divine Wisdom. Law is declared and established by reason as a participation in the providence of God, who governs all things. There are different expressions of the moral law: eternal law; natural law; revealed law and civil and ecclesiastical laws. [CCC 1950, 1952]
  - i. The Law given to Moses is the first stage of revealed law. The Old Law remains the first step on the way to the Kingdom of God. It is summed up in the Ten Commandments, which prohibit what is contrary to the love of God and neighbor and prescribe what is essential to it. [CCC 1962-1963]
  - ii. The New Law, or Law of the Gospel, is the perfection here on earth of the divine law, both natural and revealed. It is the work of Christ and is summed up particularly in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). The New Law is a law of love, of grace, and of freedom. It fulfills the commandments of the Old Law by a reform of the heart and an interior conversion. [cf. CCC 1968] Such interior conversion opens the way to justification accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

9. Lifestyles and Vocation

- a. The Second Vatican Council, repeating the constant teaching of the Church, explains the meaning of Jesus' words, "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). The Council states that "all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness, a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society" (LG 40). [CCC 2013]
- b. While vocations differ in their tasks and forms, the call to holiness is for all Christians. "Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love" (LG 41).
- c. The laity share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. "In the concrete their apostolate is exercised when they work at the evangelization and sanctification of men; it is exercised, too, when they endeavor to have the Gospel spirit permeate and improve the temporal order, going about it in a way that bears clear witness to Christ and helps forward the salvation of men" (AA 2).[CCC 873]
- d. The states of life within the Church include married life, single life, religious life and the priesthood.
  - i. Christian marriage is the union of a baptized man and woman who freely enter into a loving covenant with each other in Christ. The self-giving love of bride and bridegroom is sealed and strengthened by the Lord; the married couple imitates, and in a way represents, Christ's faithful love for His bride, the Church. Thus husbands and wives become signs, in and to the world, of God's steadfast love for His people.
  - ii. By Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, every Catholic is fully constituted as a member of the Church. Therefore, the single person who has received these sacraments must be fully committed to grow in holiness within this state of life. Those in the single state are sometimes more free from certain responsibilities found in other states of life and should contribute more of themselves to projects for the common good.
  - iii. Some members of the Church are called by God to enter into a special consecrated life. Members of religious orders dedicate themselves to following Christ by special vows and are called religious. The vows are to chaste self-dedication (chastity), poverty and obedience. There can be many different forms of the consecrated life: hermits [CCC 920-921]; consecrated virgins [CCC 922-924]; religious [CCC 925-927]; secular institutes [CCC 928-929]; and societies of apostolic life [CCC 930].

- (a) In the Church there are various religious orders, distinguished from each other because of the unique charism of their founder or foundress and because of their dedication to this charism. Some religious orders are contemplative; others are involved in the world through some special apostolic work.
  - (b) The various communities of priests, sisters and brothers have contributed much to the richness and diversity of life in the Church. Through the evangelical counsels, they bear a unique witness to the Church's mission and life. [CCC 916, 926]
- iv. Holy Orders is the sacrament by which a man is called to share in an active and intimate manner in the priesthood of Jesus Christ in a ministry of teaching, sanctifying and guiding the community of the Church. It is through the sacrament of Holy Orders that a man becomes a part of the hierarchy of the Church: deacon, priest and bishop. This sacrament is conferred through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.

D. Prayer in the Life of Faith

1. The Forms of Prayer in the Church

- a. Christians are encouraged to pray always and to offer themselves and their lives to God. Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God. [CCC 2559] In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. [CCC 2567]
- b. There are two principal types of prayer in the Church: liturgical and non-liturgical prayer.
  - i. The liturgy is the supreme expression of the prayer of the Church. It includes the Mass, the sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours, and the other official rites of the Church.
    - (a) Liturgical prayer is the prayer of the entire Church. As such, it is the official public worship given to the Father by the community of believers through Jesus Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit.
    - (b) In the sacramental liturgy of the Church, the mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit proclaims, makes present and communicates the mystery of salvation which is continued in the heart that prays. [CCC 2655]

- ii. Non-liturgical prayer refers to all other prayers offered by the members of the Church, individually or collectively, such as purely private prayer, devotions, novenas, etc.
  - (a) Private prayer is a necessary preparation for full participation in liturgical prayer. Certain common prayers should be known by all members of the Church.
  - (b) There are as many paths of prayer as there are persons who pray, but it is the same Holy Spirit who acts in all and with all. It is in the communion of the Holy Spirit that Christian prayer is prayer in the Church. [CCC 2672] Christian tradition maintains three major expressions of prayer: vocal prayer [CCC 2700-2704]; meditation [CCC 2705-2708]; and contemplation [CCC 2709-2719].
- c. The four purposes of prayer are adoration, contrition, thanksgiving, and supplication (petition). These purposes are all expressed in various forms of prayer, both liturgical and non-liturgical.
  - i. The Holy Spirit who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said also instructs her in the life of prayer, inspiring new expressions of the same basic forms of prayer: blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise. [CCC 2644]
  - ii. The forms of prayer revealed in the apostolic and canonical Scriptures remain normative for Christian prayer. [CCC 2625-2649]

## 2. The Importance of the Our Father in Christian Prayer

- a. In response to His disciples' request, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Lk. 11:1), Jesus entrusts them with the fundamental Christian prayer, the Our Father. [CCC 2773]
- b. The Lord's Prayer is the quintessential prayer of the Church. It is an integral part of the major hours of the Liturgy of the Hours and of the sacraments of Christian initiation. [CCC 2776] The Our Father is the summary of the whole Gospel, the most perfect of prayers. It is at the center of the Scriptures. [CCC 2774]
- c. In the Our Father, the object of the first three petitions is the glory of the Father: the sanctification of His name, the coming of the kingdom, and the fulfillment of His will. The four other petitions present our wants to Him: they ask that our lives be nourished, healed of sin, and made victorious in the struggle of good over evil. [CCC 2857]

RELIGION GUIDELINES REVISION  
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

II. FAITH THEMES FOR OLDER ADOLESCENTS

A. The Profession of Faith

1. Revelation

- a. The search for God begins with the ultimate questions about human existence. All people have a natural desire for God, because God created us and He continually draws us to Himself. [CCC 27, 33]
- b. Called to know and love God, we discover Him through the things He has made (cf. Rom. 1:20). The world itself and our own desires for goodness, truth, and beauty, as well as our questions about human existence and our longing for happiness all point the way to God as the origin and final end of all things. [CCC 32-34]
- c. Our search for God is fully answered by Him. God took the initiative and revealed His loving plan of salvation (cf. Eph. 1:9; 2:18; 2 Pt. 1:4). This divine revelation is realized simultaneously by deeds and words which are bound up with each other and shed light on each other. [CCC 53]
  - i. God communicated Himself to us gradually and by stages. These stages reach their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh (Jn. 1:14; cf. Heb. 1:1-2). [CCC 50-66] This is known as public revelation, which ended with the death of the last Apostle. This public revelation is contained in written form in Sacred Scripture and is handed on in the Church according to her living Tradition.
  - ii. From time to time, there have been “private” revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church. These do not belong to the deposit of faith, but they may help us to live a certain aspect of God’s saving plan more fully. [CCC 67]

2. The Old Testament

- a. The Old Testament finds its origin in God’s revelation to humanity. Revelation means God’s disclosure of Himself and His purposes through divine words and deeds. The Old Testament is the written account of God’s revelation to Israel for the sake of all peoples.

- b. The Old Testament includes 46 books in its official list (canon). The books of the Old Testament are divinely inspired and inerrant. [CCC 121, 106-107] They retain a permanent value, for the Old Covenant has never been revoked.
- c. There are various types of literary forms found in the Old Testament: poetry, songs, historical accounts, narratives, etc. The Old Testament also contains three principal divisions: the Law, the Writings, and the Prophets.
  - i. The Law (or Torah, or Pentateuch) is found in the first five books of the Bible. The Law sets out the main themes of Creation, the Fall, the Covenant, the Commandments, and Worship of God.
    - (a) The Book of Genesis presents the unique revelation concerning the origins of the universe. This revelation teaches that God created the universe out of nothing by a free and loving act of His will (cf. Rev. 4:11; 2 Macc. 7:22-23, 28). [CCC 295-296] Essential to this account is its emphasis on the goodness of creation (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) [CCC 339]
    - (b) The work of creation culminates in the creation of man and woman. [CCC 343] God creates every human person: the soul directly, the body indirectly through the cooperation of one's parents. [cf. CCC 327] The human person is created in the image and likeness of God. This is reflected in two ways: naturally in the soul, and supernaturally in that humanity was initially created in the state of grace (cf. Gen. 1:26-27).
    - (c) From the creation accounts, we learn that sexuality is an integral part of the human person and finds its ultimate meaning in the cooperation of husband and wife in continuing the work of creation (Gen. 1:28). [CCC 371-372]
    - (d) Although our first parents, Adam and Eve, were created in a state of grace, they were tempted by Satan and freely chose to commit a sin. This first sin is called original sin, which consisted of disobedience toward God and the preferring of himself (Gen. 3:1-11). [CCC 397-398]
      - (i) As a consequence of original sin, our first parents lost the state of sanctifying grace for themselves and their descendents.
      - (ii) All humanity inherits original sin and its consequences, which include suffering, death, and the tendency to sin

(Gen. 3:16-19). [CCC 399-406] The Genesis account graphically portrays the fallen nature of humanity and our inner tendency toward sin as emphasized by the rapid multiplication of sin and evil in the world. Each human being is confronted by both original sin and personal sin. [CCC 408-409]

- (e) God reveals Himself as one who is personally concerned with the salvation of all humanity by means of a hidden plan proceeding out of love. [CCC 51-53] God invites us to salvation by means of His covenant.
  - (i) Integral to God's plan of salvation were the covenants established between God and those whom He chose. These covenants (or agreements) involved certain promises made by God for our benefit and certain obligations assumed by humanity toward God.
  - (ii) The covenant between God and Noah involves a promise by God never to destroy creation and Noah's obligation to respect creation and to render an account of his stewardship. [CCC 56-58]
  - (iii) The covenant between God and Abraham involves a promise by God to bless the human race in Abraham's offspring (i.e., redemption) and Abraham's obligation to remain faithful to God. [CCC 59-61] Abraham's election is a free act of God's love to which Abraham responded with great faith and trust.
  - (iv) The covenant between God and Moses at Mt. Sinai involves God's promise of salvation by making Israel a holy nation, a people set apart as God's own while they are obligated to keep God's commandments and worship Him in accordance with the dictates of the covenant (Ex. 19-24).
    - (a) The Passover from slavery and death in Egypt to the new life and freedom in the promised land was the definitive event in revealing God's saving plan to Israel.
    - (b) The ratification of the covenant at Sinai came about through the sprinkling of blood on the altar and on the people (Ex. 24:1-8).

(f) The commandments, as part of the covenant, are a gift from God. As a direct revelation of the natural law, they are meant to help shape and guide the nation of Israel. They are a sign of God's love for His people and concern for their well-being. Fidelity to the covenant demands the keeping of the commandments [CCC 1962, 2062, 2072]

(g) Worship is man's expression in external ritual of his relationship with God, in which we respond to God and are the recipients of His saving activity. Israel's worship was to be a worship which reflects the interior states of adoration, thankfulness, praise and contrition.

(i) As the Chosen People, Israel expresses its faith in the unique worship of the one true God, Yahweh, as part of the people's mission to be His witnesses (Dt. 6:4-5).

(ii) Israel's worship included various institutions. Chief among them are the cycles of annual feasts, sacrifices, a special priesthood, the cult surrounding the ark of the covenant, and certain ritual prescriptions.

(iii) The covenant was a focal point for Israel's worship. This is shown by the important place given to the ark of the covenant, as well as by the remembrance of the covenant in special feasts, culminating in the celebration of the Passover.

ii. The Writings contain much material about Israel's history after the entry into the promised land, as well as what is called Wisdom Literature. The historical books of the Old Testament narrate the stories of the Judges and the Kings. The Wisdom Literature shows God's order in creation and describes how we come to discover our vocation in relation to creation and our final destiny.

(a) As a result of the covenant, Israel becomes a nation whose religious and political dimensions are directed by God. In the early period of Israel's history, Yahweh exercised His kingship through charismatic individuals whom He raised up from His people. These judges were raised up in periods of acute crisis to deliver the Israelites from oppression and to clarify the demands of that justice which was called for by the covenant.

- (b) The institution of the king arose from the people for political motives. It was opposed by Samuel as endangering Yahweh's covenant rights as sole King of Israel (1 Sam. 8:5-7).
- (c) God will use this institution to guide Israel. Ultimately, the kingship will play a significant role in God's plan of salvation (1 Sam. 9:17; Mt. 1:1-17).
  - (i) For Israel, the king, chosen by God, was His representative and received special gifts from Yahweh. At the same time, the king represents the people of God before Yahweh.
  - (ii) King David will become the image of God's perfect king. The prophecy of Nathan that the Davidic dynasty would last forever was a clear promise of God's protection. This prophecy will find its true meaning in the Kingship of the Messiah (2 Sam. 7:13-14; Is. 11:1).
  - (iii) Although the king was God's anointed, many kings did not live up to their privileged status. This results in the splitting of the kingdom and in the political subjugation of Israel to other nations (1 Kings 11:29-39; 2 Chron. 10:16-19; 36:2-21).
    - (a) The collapse of the kingdom leads ultimately to the people's exile. This period of exile is a punishment for infidelity. It becomes a time for re-evaluating the meaning and implications of the covenant.
    - (b) The institution of the synagogue arises because of Israel's deprivation of the Temple. The synagogue was a place in which the people studied and meditated on the Word of God and worshipped.
- (d) Wisdom Literature began to be composed during the exile and afterwards. Wisdom in the Old Testament is a very rich concept. It is primarily an attribute of God who manifests it in the work of creation and salvation.
  - (i) For humanity, wisdom is the realization of the order present in creation. The wise person understands his place in creation and his final destiny. This wisdom is completed with God's revelation in Christ.

- (ii) In Wisdom Literature, wisdom is described in many different ways. It is personified, identified with the Law (Dt. 4:6), concerned with moral conduct and retribution (Job 28:28), and in a number of other ways. While some of the conclusions found in Wisdom Literature are common to and drawn from other cultures, they are perfected through the inspiration of God's Spirit.
  - iii. The prophets of the Old Testament are those who have been called by God and, having heard God's Word, in turn proclaim that Word to the people. Fidelity to this mission demanded that the prophets often chastise Israel for her infidelity to the covenant.
    - (a) The prophets' chief task was to announce God's present will for Israel and His future intentions with regard to salvation. The prophets reminded Israel of the obligations of the covenant and called the people to conversion by showing that their sins distanced them from Yahweh.
    - (b) The exilic prophets developed the concept of a future definitive deliverance by God from all oppression. In this future deliverance, God will put His own Spirit in the hearts of the people. This gift will enable them to be faithful forever to a new and final covenant (Ez. 36:24-28).
      - (i) With the fall of Jerusalem, the monarchy was dissolved. Through the prophets, there arose the expectation for a Messiah king (Is. 11).
      - (ii) The word "Messiah" means "anointed." Those anointed in the Old Testament included kings, priests and prophets. Anointing was seen as the way God communicated His Spirit to His chosen ones (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1).
      - (iii) Many of the expectations related to the Messiah are developed by the prophets. The most prominent are the figure of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah and the Son of Man in Daniel. [cf. CCC 440]
3. The New Testament
- a. The New Testament finds its origin in God's definitive self-revelation in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of His Son, Jesus Christ. [CCC 65, 124]

- b. As Sacred Scripture, the New Testament is both inspired and inerrant. [CCC 105-107] The New Testament contains various types of writings: the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, Apostolic Letters (Epistles), and the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation).
  - i. The term “gospel” means “good news.” The four Gospels are at the heart of the New Testament and of all Scripture. [CCC 125] The Gospels proclaim salvation in Christ through their inspired accounts of His life and teachings. [cf. CCC 126-127]
  - ii. The word “epistle” means “letter.” The Epistles are concerned with the demands of living the Christian life and contain further elucidations of the Gospel under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament contains 13 letters of St. Paul, 2 letters of St. Peter, 3 letters of St. John, 1 letter of St. James, 1 letter of St. Jude, and the Letter to the Hebrews.
  - iii. The Acts of the Apostles describes the growth of the early Church communities from the time of the Lord’s ascension until the imprisonment of St. Paul in Rome.
  - iv. The Apocalypse (Book of Revelation) is composed of symbolic and allegorical imagery related to the end times. It is meant to assure the persecuted faithful in every age of God’s ultimate triumph and vindication.
- c. The Old Testament and the New Testament form one unity. The New Testament lies hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New. [CCC 129]
- d. The Word of God comes to us through both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition.
  - i. Sacred Scripture is the written record of God’s relationship with humanity and His saving action in history.
  - ii. Sacred Tradition is the living record of God’s saving action in history handed on to every generation by the Apostles and their successors. [CCC 77-79] Through Tradition, the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes. [CCC 78]
  - iii. Both Scripture and Tradition must be honored and accepted with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence. [CCC 82]

4. The Holy Trinity

- a. From the beginning, the revealed truth of the Holy Trinity has been at the root of the Church's living faith. It finds its expression in the baptismal creed, the preaching, the catechesis and the prayer of the Church. [CCC 249]
- b. During the first centuries the Church sought to clarify its Trinitarian faith. This was the work of the early councils, aided by the theological writings of the Church Fathers and sustained by the Christian people's sense of the faith. [CCC 250]
  - i. We believe that there is only one God, not three gods. This one God exists eternally in three divine persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three persons do not share the divinity among themselves, but each is God whole and entire. [CCC 253]
  - ii. The divine persons are really distinct from one another. The Father is not the Son nor the Holy Spirit; the Son is not the Father nor the Holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit is not the Father nor the Son. [CCC 254]
  - iii. The divine persons are related to each other. The inner life of God is an eternal communion of life and love. The divine persons cannot be separated from each other. [CCC 255]
- c. God is perfectly blessed and complete in Himself. He needs nothing outside of Himself in order to be happy. Out of love, however, God freely wills to communicate the glory of His blessed life. This plan unfolds in the work of creation, the whole history of salvation after the fall, and the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit, which are continued in the mission of the Church. [CCC 257]
- d. The whole plan of salvation history is the work of the Trinity Itself. However, the Church attributes certain aspects of this plan to each person of the Trinity. To the Father is attributed the work of creation, since He is the origin and source of all life. To the Son is attributed the work of redemption, since He, as the Word of God, became man in order to communicate God's saving truth to us. To the Holy Spirit is attributed the work of sanctification, since He is the bond of love between Father and Son, and He pours out this love into our lives. [CCC 258-259] The whole of Christian life is a communion with the Trinity Itself.
- e. The ultimate end of each human being is our entry into the perfect communion and life of the Blessed Trinity. Even now, however, we are called to be a dwelling place for the Trinity (Jn. 14:23). [CCC 260]

5. Jesus Christ

- a. “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). In Jesus Christ, God has fulfilled the promises He made to Abraham and his descendants. [CCC 422]
- b. The name “Jesus” means “God saves.” Jesus came to save us from our sins and to restore us to friendship and communion with God. [CCC 430, 432] Jesus is also addressed by the title “Christ” which means “anointed one” or “Messiah.” Jesus is the Messiah sent by the Father to redeem the entire world by His suffering, death and resurrection. [CCC 436, 440]
- c. Jesus gave His life to atone for the sins of all people (Jn. 3:13; Mt. 20:28). By giving up His life, Jesus manifests the redeeming love of God. This love is extended to every human being without exception (cf. 2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Jn. 2:2). [CCC 605]
  - i. The suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord is called the Paschal Mystery. In the Paschal Mystery, Jesus reveals the mystery of God’s love and His victory over sin and death.
  - ii. At the Last Supper, Jesus anticipated the free offering of His life and transformed this Last Supper into the memorial of His voluntary sacrifice. [CCC 610] The Eucharist is the memorial and the perpetuation of Christ’s sacrifice. [CCC 611] During the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus gave a share in His priesthood to the Apostles so that this Eucharistic sacrifice and banquet will be perpetuated in the Church (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Both on Calvary and in the Eucharist, Christ is the true Paschal Lamb “who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn. 1:29). [cf. CCC 1546-1547]
  - iii. The sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is unique; it accomplishes our definitive redemption and destroys the power of sin and death. [CCC 613-614] Jesus accepted His death out of obedience to His Father’s will and to atone for the disobedience of Adam. [CCC 615]
  - iv. By rising to a new life, Jesus restores our supernatural life. The resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith. This was the central truth preached by the early Christian community and it continues to be handed on, proclaimed and celebrated by the Church today. [CCC 638]
    - (a) Christ’s resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were

historically verified in the New Testament. [CCC 639] At the same time, the resurrection remains at the heart of the mystery of our faith as something that transcends and surpasses history. [CCC 647]

- (b) The resurrection is the confirmation of all of Christ's works and teachings; it is the fulfillment of God's promises both in the Old Testament itself and Jesus' own promises during His earthly life. [CCC 651-652]
  - (c) Christ's Paschal Mystery has two aspects: by His death, Christ frees us from sin; by His resurrection, He opens for us the way to a new life. [CCC 654] Christ's resurrection brings about our adoption as children of God by which we are given a real share in the divine life of Jesus Himself. Christ's resurrection also is the anticipation and source of our own future resurrection (1 Cor. 5:28). [CCC 655]
- v. Jesus, after His resurrection, ascended to His Father where He lives and reigns in glory. As the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ precedes us into the Father's glorious kingdom, so that we, the members of His Body, may live in the hope of one day being with Him forever. [CCC 666] Seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus intercedes constantly for us as the mediator who assures us of the permanent outpouring of the Holy Spirit. [CCC 667]
- d. Salvation comes to us through a real but mysterious participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ. [CCC 618] Jesus calls His disciples to take up the cross and follow Him (Mt. 16:24).
- e. Our participation in the Paschal Mystery is expressed in a special way in the sacraments. Sacraments are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in His Body, the Church. [CCC 1116] The sacraments manifest and communicate to us the mystery of communion with the God who is love, One in three persons. [CCC 1118]
- f. Through the communication of the Holy Spirit, the mission of Christ is brought to completion, and the faithful are prepared to be drawn into communion with God. [CCC 737]
- i. In the Spirit, the Christian is able to live in longing and expectation for the final coming of the Lord.
  - ii. God, in His infinite mercy, love and justice, invites all people to enjoy eternal life with Him. During our lives, we can either accept or

reject this offer to share His life. [CCC 679] At the moment of death, each person will be judged on the basis of his or her faith and works. [CCC 1021-1022]

- (a) Those who have fulfilled the will of God in life and die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live forever with Christ in heaven. [CCC 1023]
  - (b) All who die in God's grace and friendship, but who are still imperfectly purified of sin and attachment to sin, are assured of eternal salvation. After death, however, they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. [CCC 1030] The Church gives the name "Purgatory" to this state of final purification. [CCC 1031]
  - (c) We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love Him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against Him, against our neighbor or against ourselves (cf. 1 Jn. 3:14-15). To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from Him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called "hell." [CCC 1033]
- iii. We believe that Jesus Christ will come again at the end of time to judge the living and the dead. This Last Judgment will be preceded by the resurrection of the dead. [CCC 1038] Because no one knows the day or the hour of Christ's Second Coming, we are all called to a conversion of life and to the hope of salvation. [CCC 1041]

## B. The Sacraments of Faith

### 1. The Sacraments of Initiation

- a. The sacraments of initiation are Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. These are the sacraments which together form the basis of every Catholic's life, enabling us to live a mature life of discipleship in the world.
- b. Baptism initiates a person into a new life in Christ through insertion into His Paschal Mystery. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as children of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission. [CCC 1213]
  - i. The sacramental sign of Baptism is either the triple pouring of water or

immersion in water with the words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (cf. Mt. 28:19-20). [CCC 1239-1240]

- ii. The action of Baptism signifies both the death and the resurrection of Christ (cf. Rom. 6:3-4). Because this is a true sacrament, the person mystically participates in the death of Christ, dying to sin, and the resurrection of Christ, rising to new life and membership in His Mystical Body. [CCC 1227, 1265, 1267-1270]
- iii. The two principal effects of Baptism are purification from sins and new birth in the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38; Jn. 3:50. [CCC 1262]
  - (a) By Baptism, all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. [CCC 1263]
  - (b) Baptism makes us “new creatures,” “sharers of the divine nature” (2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Pt. 1:4). In Baptism, the person receives a permanent spiritual mark (“character”) which identifies us as belonging to Christ. This interior sign can never be erased and is linked to the Christian’s participation in the priesthood of Christ and in His prophetic and royal mission. [CCC 1272-1274, 1268]
- c. Confirmation completes baptismal grace. By this sacrament, we are more perfectly bound to the Church and enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. We are made true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed. [CCC 1285]
  - i. The laying on of hands and the anointing with chrism, together with the words, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit” form the essential rite of the sacrament. [CCC 1300] These actions are ancient signs of God’s gift of the Spirit. [CCC 1288-1289]
  - ii. By this anointing, the person confirmed receives the seal of the Holy Spirit, which, like Baptism, marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in His service forever, and the promise of divine protection in time of trial (cf. Rev. 7:2-3; 9:4; Ez. 9:4-6). [CCC 1296]
  - iii. The effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost. The reception of the Holy Spirit brings with it many gifts and fruits which assist a person in bearing witness to Christ and building up His body. [CCC 1303, 1831-1832]
- d. The Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. The Eucharist recalls and re-presents Jesus’ sacrifice of His Body and Blood on the cross. The sacrament

of the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. [CCC 1322-1324]

- i. The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the making present and the sacramental offering of His unique sacrifice in the liturgy of the Church which is His Body. [CCC 1362] The sacrifice Christ offered once on the cross remains ever present (cf. Heb. 7:25-27). [CCC 1364]
- ii. In the Church's liturgy, Jesus is really present in many ways: He is present in the Scriptures, in the assembly, in the person of His minister the priest, and finally He is most uniquely present in the sacrament of the Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine. [CCC 1373]
- iii. In the Eucharist, Jesus makes present again the sacrifice of Calvary by transforming bread and wine into His Body and Blood. This change, called transubstantiation, is brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit through the words of consecration spoken by the priest. [CCC 1374-1377]
- iv. The Eucharist is also a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Father for all that He has done for us. [CCC 1360] The word "Eucharist" itself means "thanksgiving." The Eucharistic sacrifice is the supreme worship of God offered by the entire Mystical Body in praise, thanksgiving, adoration, expiation, and petition.
- v. The celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice is directed toward the intimate union of the faithful with Christ through communion. [CCC 1382] In Holy Communion, the banquet of Christ's sacrifice, Jesus is received as the supreme gift of the Father. Anyone conscious of grave sin must receive the Sacrament of Penance before coming to communion. [CCC 1385]
  - (a) Holy Communion increases our union with Jesus Christ (Jn. 6:57). Communion with the Body and Blood of Jesus preserves, increases and renews the life of grace received in Baptism. [CCC 1392]
  - (b) Holy Communion also separates us from sin by an increase of charity. Communion wipes away venial sins and preserves us from future mortal sins. [CCC 1394-1395]
  - (c) Holy Communion unites those who receive it to all the faithful in one body, the Church (1 Cor. 10:16-17). The Eucharist renews, strengthens and deepens the incorporation into the Church already achieved by Baptism. [CCC 1396]

- (d) The Eucharist is also the pledge of the future glory we will share in heaven. [CCC 1402-1405]

## 2. The Sacraments of Healing

- a. The Lord Jesus has willed that His Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, His work of healing and salvation. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. [CCC 1421]
- b. The sacrament of Penance is the sacrament in which Christ continues the effects of His Paschal Mystery, reconciling us to the Father through the forgiveness of sins and an increase in the life of grace. [CCC 1423-1424]
  - i. The sign of the sacrament consists of the confession of sins with sorrow, a willingness to atone, and the words of absolution spoken by the priest. The priest speaks in the person of Christ and is the sign and instrument of God's merciful love for the sinner. [CCC 1442, 1444, 1456, 1461-1467] The priest is absolutely bound to keep secret the sins that penitents have confessed to him (the "sacramental seal").
  - ii. The Church teaches that every mortal sin must be confessed. Mortal sin is a grave rupture of one's relationship with God, a rejection of God and His grace. [CCC 1855] Mortal sin endangers our relationship with the Church as well. Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is strongly recommended by the Church. [CCC 1458]
  - iii. God continually calls every Christian to an ongoing conversion of life and growth in holiness. [CCC 1427-1428] The sacrament of Penance is not only the means for restoring God's life lost through mortal sin, but a primary means and expression of this ongoing conversion and deepening of our relationship with God. Interior repentance and conversion is a radical reorientation of our whole life. [CCC 1431]
  - iv. The effects of the sacrament of Penance are first of all reconciliation with God and also reconciliation with the Church--the restoration of fraternal communion damaged or even broken by sin. [CCC 1468-1469]
- c. The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is for those who are in danger of death from illness or old age. [CCC 1514] This sacrament expresses in a vivid way our participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ.
  - i. In His earthly life, Jesus often healed those who were sick (Lk. 6:19).

Especially by His passion and death on the cross, Jesus has given new meaning to suffering: it can conform us to Him and unite us with His redemptive Passion. [CCC 1505] The Church continues Christ's healing mission by taking care of the sick and interceding for them (James 5:14-15). [CCC 1509]

- ii. The effects of this sacrament are to strengthen and console the sick person. [CCC 1520] The sick person is helped to unite himself more closely to Christ's Passion. [CCC 1521] Cure of bodily illness may also be brought about through the sacrament. [CCC 1520] Its primary purpose is to strengthen the person spiritually by joining his sufferings to the Passion of Christ and to comfort the person by means of the Lord's continued presence, even in illness.
- iii. The Anointing of the Sick completes our conformity to the death and resurrection of Christ, just as Baptism began it. So powerful is this sacrament that in the case where a person is unable to receive the sacrament of Penance, the Anointing of the Sick is capable of forgiving even grave sin.

### 3. The Sacraments at the Service of Communion

- a. The sacraments of Holy Orders and Matrimony are directed towards the salvation of others. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God. [CCC 1534]
- b. Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to His apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry, and includes three degrees (episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate). [CCC 1536]
  - i. Through Holy Orders, a man is called to share in an active and intimate manner the priestly saving action of Jesus Christ in a ministry of sanctifying, teaching and shepherding the Christian community. This sacrament is conferred by the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit. [CCC 1538] The sacrament of Holy Orders, which can be received only once, grants to the man ordained an indelible spiritual character configuring the recipient to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit. [CCC 1581-1582]
  - ii. In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ Himself who is present to His Church as Head of His Body. The priest, by virtue of his ordination, acts in the person of Christ the Head. [CCC 1548] The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ builds up and leads His Church.

- iii. The fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders is conferred by episcopal consecration. Bishops are the successors of the Apostles. They teach, govern and sanctify the particular church entrusted to them by the Pope. Bishops take the place of Christ Himself and act as His representative. [CCC 1558, 1560]
  - iv. Priests are co-workers with the bishops. Priests are consecrated to preach the Gospel and shepherd the faithful as well as to celebrate divine worship. [CCC 1564-1565] Priests exercise their ministry only in dependence on the bishop and in communion with him. [CCC 1567]
  - v. Deacons are ordained not to the priesthood, but to the ministry. It is the task of deacons to assist the bishop and priests in the celebration of the liturgy, above all the Eucharist; in the distribution of Holy Communion; in assisting at and blessing marriages; in the proclamation of the Gospel and preaching; in presiding over funerals; and in dedicating themselves to the various ministries of charity. [CCC 1570]
- c. Christian marriage is the union of a baptized man and woman who freely enter into a loving covenant with each other in Christ. The self-giving love of bride and bridegroom is sealed and strengthened by the Lord; the married couple imitates, and in a way represents, Christ's faithful love for His bride, the Church. Thus, husbands and wives become signs, in and to the world, of God's steadfast love for His people [cf. CCC 2335, 1601, 1604]
- i. God who created man and woman out of love also calls us to love. This love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation (Gen. 1:28). Man and woman were created for each other (Gen. 2:18; 2:24).
  - ii. Married love is designed by God to unite husband and wife in a permanent, life-long union. [CCC 1644-1645] This union requires the inviolable fidelity of the spouses which mirrors the unbreakable fidelity of God to His covenant, of Christ to His Church. [CCC 1646-1647]
  - iii. Married love, by its very nature, is also ordered to the procreation and education of children (cf. Gen. 2:18; 1:28). Married couples should regard it as their proper mission to transmit human life and to educate their children; in this way, they cooperate with the love of God the Creator. [CCC 1652, 2367] The Church teaches that all forms of contraception and direct sterilization are contrary to the natural law and are gravely immoral. [CCC 2368-2370]

- iv. In the Latin (Western) Church, the spouses themselves are the ministers of the sacrament of Matrimony. The priest normally witnesses the marriage in the name of the Church. [CCC 1623]
  - (a) The consent by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another is sealed by God Himself (cf. Mk. 10:9). From this exchange of consent, a bond arises between husband and wife which is perpetual and exclusive. [CCC 1638]
  - (b) Christian marriage also confers a special grace upon the spouses in order to help them attain holiness in their married life. Christ dwells with the spouses to give them the strength to love one another, to forgive one another, and to follow Him each day. [CCC 1641-1642]
- 4. Worship
  - a. In her liturgy, the Church proclaims and celebrates the Paschal Mystery of Christ so that the faithful may live from it and bear witness to it in the world. [CCC 1068]
  - b. The liturgy is also a participation in Christ's own prayer addressed to the Father in the Holy Spirit. In the liturgy, all Christian prayer finds its source and goal. [CCC 1073] In the earthly liturgy, we already share in a foretaste of the heavenly worship offered to God. [CCC 1090]
  - c. Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. [CCC 1088] We should prepare ourselves to encounter the Lord and so participate actively in the liturgical actions. The Holy Spirit seeks to awaken faith, conversion of heart, and adherence to the Father's will in those who take part in the liturgical celebrations.
    - (a) The mission of the Spirit is to prepare the assembly to encounter Christ; to recall and manifest Christ to the faith of the assembly; to make the saving work of Christ present and active by His transforming power; and to make the gift of communion bear fruit in the Church. [CCC 1112]
    - (b) The Holy Spirit also unites us in the Body of Christ. The Church, in her liturgical prayer, asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to make the lives of the faithful a living sacrifice to God by their spiritual transformation into the image of Christ, by concern for the Church's unity, and by taking part in her mission through the witness and service of charity. [CCC 1109, 1368]

- d. Every sacramental celebration is a meeting of God’s children with their Father, in Christ and the Holy Spirit; this meeting takes the form of a dialogue, through actions and words. [CCC 1153] The sacraments of the Church purify and integrate the richness of the signs and symbols present in creation and in social life. They also fulfill the types and figures of the Old Testament, signifying and making actively present the salvation brought to us by Christ, and they anticipate the glory of heaven. [CCC 1152]

C. The Life of Faith

1. Catholic Morality

- a. Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, Christians are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11) and so participate in the life of the Risen Lord. Jesus Himself is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:6); Christian morality means pursuing the way of Christ which leads to eternal life.
- b. It is in the Church, in communion with all the baptized, that the Christian fulfills his vocation. [CCC 2030] To the Church belongs the right to announce moral principles which apply both to personal life and to social life. [cf. CCC 2032]
  - i. The Magisterium of the Church in moral matters is ordinarily exercised in catechesis and preaching, with the help of theologians and spiritual writers. [CCC 2033]
  - ii. The ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him teach the faithful the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope for. [CCC 2034]
- c. The message of salvation shows forth the power of its truth when it is authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians. Christians contribute to the building up of the Body of Christ by the firmness of their convictions and their moral lives. By living with the mind of Christ, Christians help to foster the coming of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice, love and peace. [CCC 2044-2046]

2. Conscience, Virtue and Sin

- a. Conscience is a special exercise of human reason which involves the knowledge of moral principles and the application of those principles to concrete situations. [CCC 1777-1780] Conscience enables a person to assume responsibility for the acts performed (cf. Rom. 1:32; 2:14-16).

- i. “Conscience is man’s most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths” (GS 16). Conscience is a person’s immediate norm of the moral life.
- ii. In order to be truthful and authentic in our actions, we are obliged to follow our conscience. Following one’s conscience is a moral duty. [CCC 1782, 1790] At the same time, we have a serious responsibility to form our conscience rightly. A well-formed conscience makes judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. [CCC 1783]
  - (a) The formation of conscience is a life-long task. For a Christian, conscience formation means putting on the mind and heart of Christ.
  - (b) In the formation of conscience, the Word of God is the light for our path (cf. Ps. 119:105). We must assimilate it in faith and prayer, and put it into practice. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others, and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church. [CCC 1785]
  - (c) One’s conscience must be formed by prayer, meditation on the Scriptures, on the life of Christ, and by the study of the natural law. Ultimately for a Catholic, one’s conscience is formed through submission in faith to the teachings of the Church.
- b. The practice of the moral life should be animated by the virtues; we are called to pursue what is good and to choose what is good in all our concrete actions. The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God. [CCC 1803]
  - i. A virtue is a good habit, inclining a person to do what is good and right more easily (cf. Phil. 4:8). [CCC 1803]
  - ii. There are certain natural moral virtues which are acquired by human effort. Four of these virtues play a pivotal role and are called “cardinal virtues”: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance (cf. Wis. 8:7). [CCC 1804-1805]
    - (a) Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it. [CCC 1806]
    - (b) Justice is the virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give to God and neighbor what is due to them. [CCC 1807]

- (c) Fortitude is the virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. [CCC 1808]
    - (d) Temperance is the virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. [CCC 1809]
  - iii. The human virtues are rooted in the theological virtues, which adapt our natural faculties for participation in the divine nature. The three theological virtues are faith, hope and charity (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13). The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity. [CCC 1812-1813]
    - (a) Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that He has said and revealed to us, and that the Church proposes for our belief, because God is truth itself. [CCC 1814]
    - (b) Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying, not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. [CCC 1817]
    - (c) Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. [CCC 1822]
- c. Sin is a rejection of God and His will for us. It is a disobedience, a turning away from God. Sin wounds our human nature and injures human solidarity. It is a failure in genuine love for God and neighbor. [CCC 1849]
  - i. We are born in the state of original sin. Original sin is the sin committed by our first parents who abused their freedom and disobeyed God's command. [CCC 397-398] After this first sin, Scripture and the Church's Tradition continually recall the presence and universality of sin in our history. [CCC 401]
  - ii. Personal sins are those sins committed by individuals who act contrary to God's law. Personal sin resides essentially in the interior rejection of God's command of love, but this rejection is often expressed in exterior acts (cf. Mt. 15:19-20). [CCC 1853] Personal sins are evaluated according to their seriousness.
    - (a) Mortal sin radically turns us away from God; it destroys charity in the heart of a person by a grave violation of God's law. [CCC

1854] To choose deliberately--that is, both knowing it and willing it--something gravely contrary to the divine law and to the ultimate end of man is to commit a mortal sin. Unrepented, it brings eternal death. [CCC 1874]

- (b) Venial sin is committed when, in a less serious matter, we do not observe the divine law, or when we disobey the moral law in a grave matter but without full knowledge or without complete consent. [CCC 1862] Venial sins weaken our relationship with God, but they do not break it off entirely.
- iii. God's grace is stronger than the power of sin, thanks to the death and resurrection of Jesus. However, evil continues to damage our freedom and endanger our destiny. Much of the evil in the world can be traced to the work of Satan, the tempter, but the Church teaches that victory over Satan, sin and death has been achieved in Christ. By living in union with Jesus Christ, we share in His victory over the power of evil.

### 3. Justice and Peace

- a. The Church receives from the Gospel the full revelation of the truth about the human person. The Church teaches the demands of justice and peace in conformity with divine wisdom. [CCC 2419] The concern of the Church, then, is for the total good of each person since each person is called by Christ to salvation. The Church urges all her members to be committed to the transformation of society by the Gospel.
- b. In light of the Church's understanding of her commitment to human welfare, all Christians are encouraged to work for decisions in the political and economic arena that will safeguard the right of every man to human and civil culture in harmony with the dignity of the human person, without distinction of race, sex, nation, religion, or social circumstances.
- c. In the area of economic and social life, the dignity and entire vocation of the human person, as well as the welfare of society as a whole have to be respected and fostered; for man is the source, the focus and the end of all economic and social life (GS 63).
  - i. The person is not to be a slave to any economic system. [CCC 2423-2425] Economic policy should be created in light of the equality of all people and for their common good. [CCC 2426] Provision should be made for the employment and education of all, as well as for the care of those affected by old age and sickness. [cf. CCC 2433]

- ii. Work is a duty which involves a person in prolonging the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another. [CCC 2427] Through work, one's talents are perfected, creation perfected and others' needs served. Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his life and that of his family, and of serving the human community. [CCC 2428]
  - iii. The Church teaches that workers are entitled to a just wage. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice (cf. Lev. 19:13; Dt. 24:14-15). A just wage should take into account the needs and the contributions of each person. [CCC 2434] Workers are entitled to decent housing and sufficient leisure. They should also have input into decisions which affect them. They have the right to collective bargaining. Workers are urged to settle any disputes through dialogue and only as a last resort should they have recourse to a strike. [CCC 2435]
  - iv. In the beginning, God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race. [CCC 2402] The appropriation of property is legitimate for guaranteeing the freedom and dignity of persons and for meeting their basic needs. The right to private property does not do away with the universal destination of goods, but the common good of society requires respect for the right to private property and its exercise. [CCC 2403]
- d. The Church teaches that political authority must be exercised in light of the moral order and the common good. Authority means the quality by virtue of which persons or institutions make laws and give orders to others and expect obedience from them. [CCC 1897]
- i. Every human community needs an authority to govern it. The role of authority is to ensure, as far as possible, the common good of the society. [CCC 1898]
  - ii. Citizens are bound to obey all just laws and must be committed to the common good. However, citizens do have the right to defend their legitimate rights and the rights of their fellow citizens. Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good of the group concerned and if it employs morally licit means to attain it. Unjust laws or measures contrary to the moral order are not binding in conscience. [CCC 1903]
  - iii. Citizens are urged to participate in the political life of their country. Included in this duty are the exercise of one's voting rights and (if one has the talent and desire) public office. Citizens should always strive to

bring the light of the Gospel into the political arena. [cf. CCC 1915, 2240]

- iv. The state exists to ensure the common good and must be clearly committed to the welfare and legitimate freedom of all its citizens. Political authorities are obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person. [CCC 2237]
  - (a) More prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and means of livelihood which he cannot find in his own country. [CCC 2241]
  - (b) Citizens are obliged in conscience not to follow the directives of civil authorities when these are contrary to the demands of the moral order, the fundamental rights of persons, or the teachings of the Gospel (cf. Mt. 22:21; Acts 5:29). [CCC 2242, 1903]
- e. All Christians and peoples of the earth should strive for peace. Respect for and development of human life require peace. [CCC 2304] Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among all, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the practice of fraternal charity.
  - i. The Church is firm in its teaching that peace must be based on justice. This means respect for persons in light of their God-given dignity. Without a genuine respect for the material and spiritual rights of persons, true peace is impossible.
  - ii. One of the grave obstacles to peace is the unequal distribution of wealth among nations. Injustice, excessive economic or social inequalities, envy, distrust, and pride among men and nations constantly threaten peace and cause wars. Everything done to overcome these disorders contributes to building up peace and avoiding war. [CCC 2317]
  - iii. All citizens and governments are obliged to work for the avoidance of war. However, governments cannot be denied the right of lawful self-defense, once all peace efforts have failed. [CCC 2308]
    - (a) There are strict conditions for legitimate defense by military force. [CCC 2309]
    - (b) The moral law remains in force during armed conflict. Non-combatants, wounded soldiers and prisoners must be respected

and treated humanely. One is morally bound to resist orders that command genocide. [CCC 2312-2313]

- (c) Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and man, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation. [CCC 2314] Nations are called upon to eliminate the threat of such warfare by reducing the accumulation of arms and working together to end the arms race. [CCC 2315]

#### 4. Lifestyles and Vocation

- a. The Second Vatican Council, repeating the constant teaching of the Church, explains the meaning of Jesus' words, "You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). The Council states that "all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness, a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society" (LG 40). [CCC 2013]
- b. While vocations differ in their tasks and forms, the call to holiness is for all Christians. "Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love" (LG 41).
- c. The laity share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. "In the concrete their apostolate is exercised when they work at the evangelization and sanctification of men; it is exercised, too, when they endeavor to have the Gospel spirit permeate and improve the temporal order, going about it in a way that bears clear witness to Christ and helps forward the salvation of men" (AA 2).[CCC 873]
- d. The states of life within the Church include married life, single life, religious life and the priesthood.
  - i. Christian marriage is the union of a baptized man and woman who freely enter into a loving covenant with each other in Christ. The self-giving love of bride and bridegroom is sealed and strengthened by the Lord; the married couple imitates, and in a way represents, Christ's faithful love for His bride, the Church. Thus husbands and wives become signs, in and to the world, of God's steadfast love for His people.
    - (a) The family is the basic cell of society and the Church. Its sanctity should be respected and defended. All members of the Church are urged to do everything in their power to strengthen and support families.

- (b) Families are called to be generous in serving life. This includes not only the procreation of children but also the handing on to their children the fruits of the moral, spiritual, and supernatural life. [CCC 1653] At the same time, spouses and all people are reminded that human life is sacred from the first moment of its conception until death. Direct abortion and euthanasia are crimes against the moral law and are always gravely wrong.
  - (c) Parents have the primary right and obligation to educate their children, especially to educate them in the faith. [CCC 1656]
- ii. By Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, every Catholic is fully constituted as a member of the Church. Therefore, the single person who has received these sacraments must be fully committed to grow in holiness within this state of life. Those in the single state are sometimes more free from certain responsibilities found in other states of life and should contribute more of themselves to projects for the common good.
  - (a) Single persons are especially close to Jesus' heart and deserve the affection and solicitude of the Church. [CCC 1658]
  - (b) Those who are widowed and divorced, as well as those who bear the sole responsibility for the family, merit the special care and concern of the Christian community.
- iii. Some members of the Church are called by God to enter into a special consecrated life. Members of religious orders dedicate themselves to following Christ by special vows and are called religious. The vows are to chaste self-dedication (chastity), poverty and obedience. There can be many different forms of the consecrated life: hermits [CCC 920-921]; consecrated virgins [CCC 922-924]; religious [CCC 925-927]; secular institutes [CCC 928-929]; and societies of apostolic life [CCC 930].
  - (a) In the Church there are various religious orders, distinguished from each other because of the unique charism of their founder or foundress and because of their dedication to this charism. Some religious orders are contemplative; others are involved in the world through some special apostolic work.
  - (b) The various communities of priests, sisters and brothers have contributed much to the richness and diversity of life in the Church. Through the evangelical counsels, they bear a unique witness to the Church's mission and life. [CCC 916, 926]

- iv. Holy Orders is the sacrament by which a man is called to share in an active and intimate manner in the priesthood of Jesus Christ in a ministry of teaching, sanctifying and guiding the community of the Church. It is through the sacrament of Holy Orders that a man becomes a part of the hierarchy of the Church: deacon, priest and bishop. This sacrament is conferred through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.
  
- D. Prayer in the Life of Faith
  - 1. The Traditions of Christian Prayer
    - a. Christians are encouraged to pray always and to offer themselves and their lives to God. Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and ourselves in Christ. [CCC 2564] The life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the Triune God and in communion with Him. [CCC 2565]
    - b. There is a richness and diversity to the forms of prayer in the Christian tradition. Common to many of these forms is the need for silence, for meditation on the word of God, and for openness to contemplation.
      - i. Through His Word, God speaks to us. By words, mental or vocal, our prayer takes flesh. [CCC 2700] Vocal prayer is an essential element of the Christian life. It is an imitation of those moments in the Lord's life when He prayed to His Father. [CCC 2701]
      - ii. Meditation helps us to seek answers to the why and how of Christian life in order to respond to what the Lord is asking of us. [CCC 2705] We are often aided in meditation by reading the Scriptures, the writings of the saints and spiritual authors, liturgical texts, or praying with icons. Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion, and desire. [CCC 2707] We should develop the desire to meditate regularly.
      - iii. Contemplative prayer seeks to turn the gaze of faith on Jesus. [CCC 2715] It is an interior prayer, in which we awaken our faith in order to enter into the presence of the Lord who waits for us. [CCC 2711] Contemplative prayer involves hearing the Word of God, being attentive to His voice in recollection and in silent love. [CCC 2716-2717, 2724] It is a union of love between ourselves and God.
    - c. Within our prayer, we bless and adore God, exalting the greatness of the Lord who made us. [CCC 2626-2628] We petition God for the coming of His Kingdom, and for what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming. [CCC 2632] We intercede for others, as Jesus intercedes for us. Christian intercession is an expression of the communion of saints. [CCC 2635-

2636] Thanksgiving characterizes the prayer of the Church especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. Every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving (1 Thes. 5:18; Col. 4:2). [CCC 2637-2638] The prayer of praise is that which rises to God and gives glory to Him for who He is, beyond all that He has done for us. [CCC 2649] The Eucharist contains and expresses all these forms of prayer. [CCC 2643]

2. The Spirit's Invitation to Develop a Personal Prayer Life

- a. The Holy Spirit who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said also instructs us in the life of prayer.
- b. Every time we begin to pray to Jesus, it is the Holy Spirit who draws us on the way of prayer by His grace. That is why the Church invites us to call upon the Holy Spirit every day. [CCC 2670]
- c. It is in the communion of the Holy Spirit that Christian prayer is prayer in the Church. [CCC 2672]
- d. It is always possible to pray. The action of the Holy Spirit helps us to pray everywhere and at any time. [CCC 2743]
- e. Prayer is a vital necessity. [CCC 2744] It is inseparable from the Christian life, for both prayer and the Christian life concern the same filial and loving conformity with the Father's plan of love; the same transforming union in the Holy Spirit who conforms us more and more to Christ Jesus; the same love for all, the love with which Jesus has loved us. [CCC 2745]