

CATECHISM OF THE HEART

If we are to take our faith to heart, then there are certain prayers and teachings of our faith that we need to know by heart. And, when we allow these spiritual truths to transform our hearts, we can draw closer to the heart of Jesus Christ himself.

The Catechism of the Heart rests upon the firm foundation of evangelization, and it prepares the way for faith into action. All three dimensions of “catechesis, evangelization, and faith into action” are part of our diocesan and parish spiritual vision.

Each lesson of this Catechism of the Heart builds upon the previous lessons, until all eight lessons are mastered. There are some spiritual prayers and teachings that Catholic Christians cannot “not” know by heart. This is a summary of them.

Finally, regard the Catechism of the Heart as your B.I.B.L.E., that is, Basic Information Before Leaving Earth. With a working vocabulary of key spiritual teachings, we can talk about both the meaning of life and our new life in Christ in heartfelt ways.

LESSON ONE: BASIC CATHOLIC PRAYERS

- **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**
(The Sign of the Cross for regular prayer and for the Gospel reading.)
- **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.**
- **Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**
- **Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**



LESSON TWO: BASIC MASS PRAYERS

Opening Rites:

- **I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

Liturgy of the Word:

- The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**
- The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**
- A reading from the holy Gospel + according to . . . **Glory to you, O Lord.**
- The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Offertory Prayer:

- Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.
- **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his holy Church.**

Preface and the Holy Holy:

- The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**
- Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
- Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right and just.**
- **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Mystery of Faith: (first option)

- **We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**

Great Amen:

- Through him, and with him, and in him . . . for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer: (conclusion)

- **For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.**

Sign of Peace:

- Peace be with you. **And with your spirit.**

Lamb of God:

- **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.**
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Communion Prayer:

- Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.
- **Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

Receiving Communion:

- The Body of Christ. **Amen.**
- The Blood of Christ. **Amen.**

Concluding Prayers:

- The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**
- May almighty God bless you . . . **Amen.**
- Go in peace. **Thanks be to God.**



LESSON THREE: CONFESSION PRAYERS

Begin with the Sign of the Cross, using these or similar words:

**Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. My last confession was ____ ago.
These are my sins: _____.**

Finish confessing your sins with these or similar words:

**I am sorry for these sins and all the sins of my life,
especially for the sin of _____.**

After receiving your Penance, make an Act of Contrition, using these or similar words:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.
Fill me with your Spirit, so that I may live a new life.
Help me to know you, to love you, and to serve you in this world,
so that I may be happy with you, both now, and for all eternity.
Thank you, Lord. Amen.

When the Priest says the prayer of Absolution, make the Sign of the Cross as he blesses you.

The Golden Rule of the Old Testament:

**“You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength;
and your neighbor as yourself.”**

The New Commandments of Jesus Christ:

**“Love one another as I have loved you.”
“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
“If you love me, keep my commandments.”**



LESSON FOUR: THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

Spiritual Definitions:

- **Sacrament:** an outward sign of inward grace, as given to us by Jesus Christ through his Church.
- **Grace:** a sharing in the life and love of God, through the power of prayer and of the sacraments.

Sacraments of Initiation:

- **Baptism:** prayerfully using water in the name of the Holy Trinity to initiate people into the Christian Faith.
- **Confirmation:** being anointed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to lead a truly Christian lifestyle.
- **Eucharist:** bread and wine are prayerfully changed into the Body and Blood of Christ for our salvation.

Sacraments of Healing:

- **Penance:** for the forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism (also called Confession and Reconciliation).
- **Anointing:** a special anointing to comfort the sick and to dedicate their sufferings to Jesus on the cross.

Sacraments of Community:

- **Ordination:** making new deacons, priests and bishops for the spiritual leadership of the Catholic Church.
- **Marriage:** blessing a man and woman as they prayerfully start their life together as a new Christian family.



LESSON FIVE: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1: I am the Lord your God. You shall not have other gods before me.

For example, power, pleasure, popularity, and possessions are false gods that always disappoint.

2: You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

For example, be respectful of all things that are dedicated to God and the service of God.

3: Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

For example, go to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, making them days of prayer and rest.

4: Honor your father and your mother.

For example, cooperate with your parents and those who are in legitimate authority.

5: You shall not kill.

For example, respect the sanctity of human life, be kind to others, and take care of your health.

6: You shall not commit adultery.

For example, be pure and faithful, embracing natural, biblical, and traditional family values.

7: You shall not steal.

For example, don't cheat, take away someone else's property, or destroy their things.

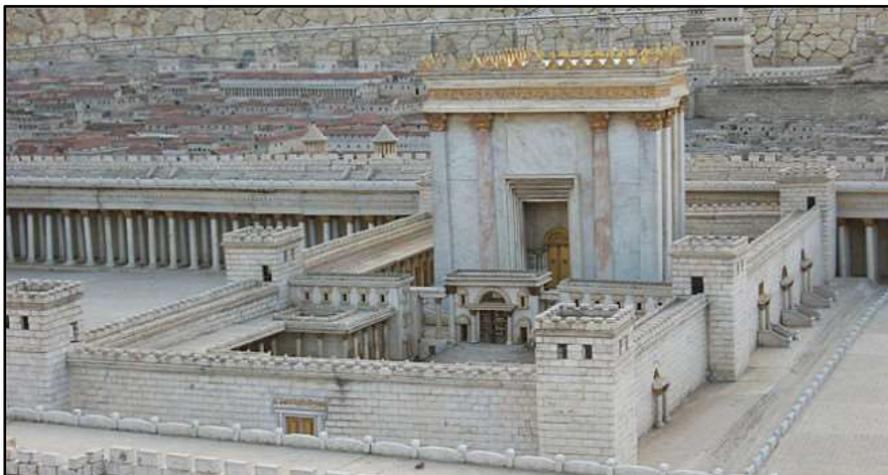
8: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

For example, be honest and truthful in all matters. Be trustworthy and a person of your word.

9-10: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

For example, appreciate what you have and do not compare what you have to what others have.

What other examples can you think of that will help you to always live your life as a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ? Let us not judge by mere human standards, but always by God's judgments, revealed to us in Scripture and Tradition!



LESSON SIX: THE SIX PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

1: Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.

- Sundays: if you are too sick to go to Mass, you are too sick to go out and play.
- Holy Days: Assumption, All Saints, Immaculate Conception, Christmas, and New Year.

2: Fast and abstain on the days appointed.

- Lenten Penance: Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all the Fridays of Lent.
- Friday Penance: to remember the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sins.

3: Go to Confession at least once a year.

- Examination of Conscience: at the end of each day reflect on your moral life.
- Formation of Conscience: follow the teachings of Christ about right and wrong.

4: Receive the Eucharist during Easter time.

- Fasting before Communion: for at least one hour prior to prepare for Communion.
- Penance before Communion: for serious sin, go to Confession before Communion.

5: Contribute to the support of the church.

- Join your parish: be a registered and active member of your parish community.
- Support your parish: your time, talent, and treasure can make a real difference.

6: Follow the marriage laws of the church.

- Getting married in the Catholic Church: go to the parish where you attend Mass each Sunday.
- Preparing for sacramental marriage: lead a pure life as a single Christian man or woman.

What other examples can you think of that will help you live out your Catholic Christian lifestyle more fully each day? When we practice our faith, we are actually rehearsing for daily life. How is your walk with Jesus going these days?



LESSON SEVEN: THE SEVEN VIRTUES AND THE APOSTLES' CREED

The Cardinal Virtues: explain these virtues in your own words, and how you practice them in your life.

- **Prudence:** judging by God's standards with spiritual wisdom and insight.
- **Justice:** making Christ's teachings your standards of fairness and good will.
- **Temperance:** make wholesome and balanced choices that promote the common good.
- **Fortitude:** have courage to live as a Christian even when society makes it difficult.

The Theological Virtues: explain these virtues in your own words, and how you practice them in your life.

- **Faith:** believe what Jesus teaches us through the Bible and Catechism as your Truth.
- **Hope:** trust that all things will work out for the good for those who put their trust in God.
- **Love:** if you live as Jesus taught, you will love the way Jesus loves as his faithful disciple.

The Apostles' Creed: an ancient summary of our most cherished religious beliefs as Christians.

- **I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth,**
- **and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**
- **who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,**
- **suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried;**
- **he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead;**
- **He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;**
- **from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**
- **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,**
- **the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.**



Ultimate spiritual questions about confirming our commitment to Jesus Christ:

- Who is Jesus Christ to you, and what makes Jesus Christ special to you in your personal life?
- What has Jesus Christ done for you that makes a difference in how you live your daily life?
- How does living as a Catholic Christian help you to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ well?
- What does Jesus Christ lovingly promise you for living out your life according to his holy teachings?

The difference that Jesus Christ makes in the lives of those who truly believe in him:

- What difference does Jesus Christ make in how I understand what life is all about?
- What difference does Jesus Christ make in how I live out my personal life each day?
- What difference does Jesus Christ make in how I stay connected to his holy Church?

LESSON EIGHT: THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit: explain them in your own words and put them into practice in your daily life.

- 1) **Knowledge:** being able to state and correctly explain the teachings of Christ and his Church.
- 2) **Understanding:** appreciating why these holy teachings make a real difference in your daily life.
- 3) **Wisdom:** accepting Christ's teachings as the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
- 4) **Counsel:** making right judgments in your daily life and in the advice that you give to others.
- 5) **Piety:** following a personal spiritual Plan of Life to support your Catholic Christian lifestyle.
- 6) **Fear of the Lord:** developing your interior life by "keeping your eyes always fixed on Jesus."
- 7) **Fortitude:** having the courage to stand by your Christian principles, especially when it is difficult.

The Four Spiritual Laws: the "kerygma" or core gospel message of salvation for Catholic Christians.

- 1) **God's Purpose:** God created us to be good, with the purpose of sharing his love and his happiness with us forever.
- 2) **Our Problem:** We rejected God's plan through sin, and thus we lost our way both in this world and in the life to come.
- 3) **God's Provision:** God provided a sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- 4) **Our Pathway:** We are on the way to heaven when we personally entrust our lives to Jesus Christ in the community of his Church.

Prayer of Commitment to Jesus Christ: a prayer that draws us to the very heart of our faith in Christ!

**LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME, A SINNER.
FILL ME WITH YOUR SPIRIT, SO THAT I MAY LIVE A NEW LIFE.
HELP ME TO KNOW YOU, TO LOVE YOU, AND TO SERVE YOU IN THIS WORLD,
SO THAT I MAY BE HAPPY WITH YOU BOTH NOW AND FOR ALL ETERNITY.
THANK YOU, LORD. AMEN.**

