

MICROCATECHISM
A Short Review of the Catholic Faith with Scripture References
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Part I: The Creed

What is the Purpose of Life?

We were created to be perfectly happy forever with God. Perfect happiness can only be found in perfect life, love, and truth, which is God. Happiness does not consist in temporary and imperfect material possessions (Lk.12:15), sensual pleasures (Ec.1:8), or human friendships, but only in perfect and eternal friendship with God. "Seek first the kingdom of God."(Mt.6:33) "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you." St. Augustine.

Divine Revelation

Divine Revelation is the Word of God. It is the truth God reveals to us about Himself and what we need to know to enter Heaven. Scripture and Tradition are the two sources of Divine Revelation (2 Thess.2:15).

Sacred Tradition

Sacred Tradition is the spoken Word of God passed on from Christ to the Apostles and from the Apostles to the Church (2 Thess.2:15, 1Cor.11:2, Matt.28:19). It is found in the Creed, Church Council Documents, and writings of Popes, Church Fathers and Doctors.(See also: 1 Cor.11:2, Ga1.1:8-9, 2Thess.2:15, 3:6, 2Tim.1:13, 2:2, 3:14.)

Sacred Scripture

Sacred Scripture is the written Word of God. It contains the history of salvation. "All scripture is inspired by God, and useful for teaching." (2Tim.3:16) God is the primary Author of Sacred Scripture (The Bible).

The Apostle's Creed: A Short Summary of God's Revelation

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 arose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

Bible Only Theory

The Catholic Church rejects the "Bible only" theory because the Bible cannot interpret itself (Acts 8:27-31, 2Pt.1:20, 21,3:16). The fact that many Bible Christians disagree on

such important issues as abortion, divorce, and infant baptism is enough to prove that the Bible cannot stand alone and explain itself. There must be a central authority to interpret it. We believe the Church is authorized by God since Scripture calls the Church “the pillar and foundation of the truth”(1Tim.3:15). God guided the Church to decide which books would make up the Bible at the Council of Carthage in 396 A.D. God guides this same Church to interpret it. One Christian with a copy of the Bible cannot interpret doctrine for himself which contradicts the Church any more than a citizen with a copy of the Constitution has authority to interpret it for the U.S. without the guidance of the Supreme Court. The “Bible only” theory is not taught by the Bible, was never taught by the apostles, and didn’t exist until 1500 A.D.

Who is God?

God is our Father. (Is.64:7)

God is our Creator. (Gen.1:1)

God is our Savior. (Lk. :47)

God is Eternal. (Ps.90:2,4)

God is all Powerful [omnipotent]. (Lk.1:37)

God is all Knowing [omniscient]. (1Sam.2:3)

God is all Good [omnibenevolent]. (Ps.136:1)

God is Just. (Ps.119:37)

God is Holy. (Lev.19:2) God is One. (Mk.12:29;32)

God is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Mt.28:19)

The Holy Trinity

The Holy Trinity is a mystery. We can only have a partial understanding of it. God possesses one nature made up of three Divine Persons. A nature is *what* something or someone is. A person is *who* someone is. God is one Divine Nature, but He is Three Divine Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. (Mt.28:19,Gen.3:22)

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the Second Divine Person of the Holy Trinity, Who became man for our salvation. His death paid our debt for sin, and merited eternal life for us. “Dying He destroyed our death, rising He restored our Life.” Jesus is both God and Man, both “Son of God” and “Son of Man.” Scripture teaches that Christ is Divine. (John 20:28, Co1.2:9, Jn.1:1, Jn.5:18, Jn.10:30)

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Third Divine Person of the Holy Trinity. The scriptures say: The Holy Spirit is God. (Jn 4:24, Acts 5:3-4, Jn 4:24, Gen 6:3). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. (Jn 14:17). The Holy Spirit is given to those who believe in Jesus and keep His commandments. (1Jn 3:23,24, 1Jn 4:13, 1Cor.12:3, Acts 5:29-32)

The 7 Gifts and Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit

7 Gifts: 1. Wisdom 2. Understanding 3. Counsel 4. Fortitude 5. Knowledge 6. Piety 7. Fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2,3)

12 Fruits: 1. Charity 2. Joy 3. Peace 4. Patience 5. Kindness 6. Goodness 7. Long-suffering 8. Humility 9. Fidelity 10. Modesty 11. Continenence 12. Chastity (Ga1.5:22,23,24)

Angels: Messengers of God

Angels are ministering spirits (Heb.1:14) created by God. Angels can appear to man as having a body (Tobit 12:19), and are described as having wings (Ex.25:20,37:9,Ezek.10:5). Everyone has a guardian angel to help protect them from spiritual and physical harm (Acts 12:15,Matt 18:10).

The Devil

The devil (Matt.4:1) was created as a good angel, but he chose to sin against God (Ezek.28:12-17, Is.14:11-15). He led a rebellion against God and some other angels followed him in this. They are called demons. (Rev.12:7-9)

Creation and The Fall of Man

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen.1:1). Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and created in the image of God. (Gen.1:26,2:7) The fall of man is his fall from grace into sin. Adam and Eve were the first man and woman created by God. They were created in grace (friendship) with God. They were tempted by the devil to disobey God (Gen.3) and committed the first (original) sin. They lost their friendship with God, and were driven out of the Garden of Eden into a world of suffering and death for them and their descendants. (Ps.51:7, Rom.5:12)

Grace

Grace is a necessary supernatural gift of God which confers new life onto the soul -- God's own Divine life. We grow in grace through receiving the sacraments, through prayer, reading scripture, and performing acts of charity. We lose grace through sin.

Sanctifying Grace

Without sanctifying grace we cannot enter into heaven. It makes us holy and pleasing to God. Being filled with sanctifying grace makes us children of God and gives us the ability to enter heaven.

Actual Grace

Actual graces are special working graces sent to us as we need them to do good works or resist temptation.

Sin

Sin is an action against God's will and commandments. "He who knows how to do the right thing and does not do it commits sin." (Jam.4:17, 1Jn.3:4). There are different degrees of sin (Mt.5:19, Jn.19:11).

Original Sin

Original sin is the sin of our first parents, which deprived us of grace and friendship with God. It has caused us to have a weakened will so that it is harder for us to do good and avoid evil. (Gen.3, Ps.51:7)

Mortal Sin

Mortal sin deprives the soul of sanctifying grace. Those who die with an unrepented mortal sin on their soul cannot enter heaven (1Jn.5:16, 17, Jn.15:6).

There are three conditions necessary for a mortal sin:

1. **Serious matter**- the thought, word, action or omission must be seriously wrong or believed to be. (Lk.12:47,48, Gen.20:1-8),
2. **Sufficient reflection**- the person must be mindful of the serious wrong (think about it before you do it).
3. **Full consent** -- freely choose to commit the sin.

Venial Sin

Venial sin is a sin which does not involve serious matter, or one in which one of the three conditions for a mortal sin is missing.

Occasion of Sin

A person, place, or thing which leads us to sin is an occasion of sin. (Mt.5:29,30, Pr.4:14,15, Sir.9:3-13)

The Church: The Body of Christ

The Church is: The Communion of Saints (Heb.10:25), The Body of Christ (Eph.1:23, 1Cor.12:27), and the Family of God (Eph.3:15)

The Four Marks of the Church

One -- All members believe one faith under the Pope (Eph.34:4-6, Jn.17:21).

Holy -- Because its teachings, its sacraments, and its founder, Christ, are holy.

Catholic -- Universal, the same in time, in place, and in doctrine.

Apostolic -- It was founded upon the Apostles (Eph.2:20, Rev.21:14).

The Pope

The word Pope means “Father”. The Pope is the Chief Shepherd of the Church, the primary teacher and ruler. The Pope is the infallible interpreter of revelation. The Pope is only infallible as Chief shepherd of the church when he clearly defines a matter concerning faith or morals. He does not make new revelation, but clarifies the original revelation of Christ and the Apostles. The Pope is not impeccable (incapable of sinning). Catholics trust the Pope because He was appointed by Christ. “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” (Mt.16:17-19) “I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.” (Lk.22:31,32) Christ named him Peter “Cephas”, which in Hebrew means “foundation stone”. “I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” (Mt.16:19) The “keys” symbolize authority (Is.22:15-25, Rv.1:18). He says to Peter, “Feed my sheep”. (Jn.21:15-17) which means “teach my church.” He appoints Peter as chief shepherd of His church. Christ is the *invisible* head of the Church, the Pope is the *visible* head. Scripture shows that the first dispute over doctrine was settled by a church council (Acts 15) presided over by the first Pope (Acts15:7). This is the scriptural model for settling disputes over doctrine. Peter is listed first in every list of Apostles (Mt.10:1-4, Mk.3:16-19, Lk.6:12-16, Acts1:13), first to work a miracle in His name (Acts3:6-7), and first to proclaim the gospel (Acts2:14).

The Blessed Virgin Mary: The New Eve

Mary is called the Blessed (Lk.1:42,48) Virgin (Mt.1:23), the Mother of Jesus (Acts 1:14), and the Mother of God. The Bible calls Christ the new Adam: “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made to live” (1Cor.15:22). The early Church Fathers called Mary the New Eve (Gen.3:15). As through Eve death came, so through Mary life came. A fallen angel deceived Eve, a virgin (Gen.3:4); she disobeyed God and brought death to the world. A good angel gave truth to a “virgin named Mary”(Lk.1:27); she obeyed God and brought life to the world. God uses the same instruments the devil used for our fall as the instruments of our redemption. Two sons of God -- Adam (Lk.3:38) and Christ, two sinless virgins- Mary and Eve, two trees -- the tree of knowledge and the cross, two angels – the Devil and Gabriel.

Mary, the Mother of God

Mary is the Mother of God because she gave birth to both the body and the soul of Jesus, to the person of Jesus Christ, who is God. (Lk.1:43, Jn.20:28) Mary is our spiritual mother. (Jn.19:25-27, Gen. 3:20)

Immaculate Conception

The Immaculate Conception means that Mary was conceived without sin. This was to prepare her for a special role as the Mother of God, so that original sin (Ps.51:5) would not be transmitted to Jesus or present when she conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38, Matt 1:18-20). God chose to apply the anticipated merits of Jesus Christ to her soul at the moment of her conception and preserve her from original sin.

Mary's Perpetual Virginity

Mary is called a perpetual virgin because she was a virgin before and after the birth of Christ. (Luke 1:34, Isaiah 7:14)

Mary's Assumption into Heaven

Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven. Mary deserved the honor of being assumed into heaven above others with a lesser role in the plan of salvation who were taken bodily to heaven (Gen.5:24, 2Kings 2, Heb.11:5,6).

The Intercession of Mary

Catholics worship only God, but they honor Mary as their spiritual Mother (Rev.12:1-17, Jn.19:26,27). Mary is a creature, not the creator. However, Mary is the Mother of God (Lk.1:43, Jn.20:28). She is our mother, and the Queen of Heaven. "For Behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed." (Lk. 1:48) We are commanded by God to "Honor your Father and Mother"(Ex.20:12), thus the honor we give to Mary our spiritual mother in no way subtracts from the worship we give to God any more than honoring our earthly mother does. In fact, it conforms to God's holy will, and we who are sons of God honor her whom the Son of God honored. Christ is our only mediator (1 Tim.2:5-6) with the Father, but Mary can intercede (pray for us) with her Son Jesus. Jesus worked His first miracle at her request (Jn.2:1-12). Just as we can ask other members of the church on earth to pray for us (1Tim.2:1, 2Tim.1:3, Phil.4:22), so, too, can we ask members of the church in heaven to pray for us. (Rev.5:8, Rev.8:26, Mt.22:31-32). As a builder is honored when someone admires his work, so too is God honored when we honor Mary. God loves us when we honor Mary as a Father is pleased when his daughter is honored. All the honor we give to Mary is reflected back to God, since we honor her for what He has done for her, with her, and through her. When we honor her we honor Him.

The Last Judgement

At death, each soul receives its own individual judgement by God. At the end of the world, Christ will return to the earth and judge it (Mt.25, Wis.1-5). He will restate the individual judgement we received at death in front of the whole world. At this time all the dead will rise (1Cor.15).

Heaven

Heaven is a place of reward and eternal happiness for those who do God's will on earth and die in a state of grace. (Mt.25:21, Rev.21:3,4)

Hell

Hell is a place of eternal punishment for those who die in a state of mortal sin and consequently have rejected God's life, truth, and love. The two main punishments of hell

are the “pain of loss”(eternal loss of friendship with God) and the “pain of sense”(eternal torment of the senses). (Mt.25:41, Mk.9:42-47, Lk.16:19-31, Mt.10:28)

Purgatory

Purgatory is a temporary place where souls go to complete penance which they did not complete on earth. (2Mac.12:46, 1Cor.3:11-15, Mt.5:23-26)

Part II: The Sacraments

A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Each sacrament has both form and matter. Form constitutes the words used in the administration of the sacrament; matter involves the pouring of water for baptism, anointing with oil for confirmation and the anointing of the sick, laying on of hands for ordination, bread and wine for mass, contrition for confession, and mutual consent for a couple choosing marriage.

Baptism: The sacrament of Baptism (Mt.28:19, Jn.3:5) is the first sacrament we receive. It is necessary to receive before receiving the other sacraments. Baptism forgives original sin, actual sin, and infuses sanctifying grace within the soul (Ezek.36:25-26, Acts 2:38, 22:16, 1Cor.6:11, Ga1.3:26-27). It applies the merits of Christ’s death on the cross to our soul, and cleanses us from sin. It makes us children of God, brothers of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit. It can only be received once and leaves an eternal mark upon the soul.

Confession: The second sacrament is the sacrament of Penance, also called Confession or Reconciliation. (Jn.20:21-23, Prv.28:13) Christ gave the power to forgive sins in His name to the Apostles, and they passed this power on to their successors, the Bishops and Priests. Confession forgives sins committed after baptism. When going to confession, one must confess all known mortal sins according to kind (type, such as adultery or theft) and number (amount, such as once, few, many). After confessing your sins, you listen to any advice the priest may offer, pray the act of contrition, receive absolution (Christ’s forgiveness) from the priest, leave the confessional, and then complete your penance (prayers the priest asks you to pray such as 3 Hail Marys). The priest is bound under pain of mortal sin not to reveal anything he has heard in confession. This is called the seal of the confessional. A priest would go to jail or die before he would reveal sins that someone confessed to him. (Luke 15, Ezekiel 33).

Blessed Sacrament: (Jn.6:25-71, Mt.26:26-28, 1Cor.11:23-26, Lk.24:30-31)

The Blessed Sacrament is also called the Holy Eucharist or Holy Communion. The Blessed Sacrament is not a symbol, but is the real Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. During the miracle of the Mass, the priest consecrates (changes) the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ at the words of institution, taken from scripture, which are: “This is my Body; this is my Blood.” (1Cor.11:24-25). The mass is called a sacrifice because it is the unbloody representation of the one and only sacrifice of Christ on the cross at Calvary (Ma1.1:10-11, Heb.13:10). Christ said: “ I am the living bread that

has come down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”(Jn.6:48-52)

If we have committed a mortal sin, we must go to confession first, before receiving Holy Communion, otherwise, instead of bringing grace to the soul, Holy Communion brings the sin of sacrilege (1Cor.11:27-29). To receive Communion, one must come forward with his or her hands folded in prayer. When you come before the priest, he will say: “The Body of Christ”. Showing your belief, you respond, “Amen”, then open your mouth and receive on the tongue (ordinary way); or you hold out your hand, palm open resting on the other hand, to receive in your hand, and immediately place the Host in your mouth (optional way).

Confirmation: (Acts:14-17, 9:17-19, 10:5, 19:5, Ti.3:4-8) Confirmation makes us spiritual adults and soldiers of Christ. It can only be received once and leaves an eternal mark upon the soul.

Holy Orders: (Gen.14:18, Heb.5:5-10,Lk.22:19, Acts.6:6, 14:22,23) This Sacrament enables Christ’s apostles and their successors to administer the Sacraments. There are three degrees of Holy Orders: deacon, priest, bishop. Only priests and bishops can administer the sacraments of Confession and offer the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Why call priests Father? They are spiritual fathers in the Church. They give life to people through proclaiming the Gospel, and by giving God’s forgiveness through the sacraments. (1Cor.4:14-15, 1Thes.2:9-12)

Why are priests celibate? They follow the example and teaching of Jesus Christ (celibate priest), to sacrifice marriage for the kingdom. (Mt.19:12, Lk.18:29, 1Cor.7)

Marriage: (Mk.10:2-12, Eph.5) This Sacrament joins a man and woman together for life by the power of God for the purpose of union (love) and procreation (life). Marriage is binding until death (1Cor.7:10,11,39, Mt.19:4-9). An annulment is a declaration made by the Church which states after a thorough investigation has been completed, that the elements necessary for a valid marriage were not present at the time of the wedding, and therefore no true marriage ever took place. It is not a “Catholic” divorce and in no way affects the validity of the children.

Anointing of the Sick: This sacrament forgives sins and may promote physical healing, if it is God’s will. (Mk.6:13, Jam.5:13-15).

Part III: The Commandments

The Two Great Commandments

I. “You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it.”

(Deut.6:5, Mt.22:37-39) The first great commandment corresponds to the first 3 of the ten commandments given to Moses.

II. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."(Lev.18:9, Mt.22:37-39) The second great commandment corresponds to the last seven commandments.

The Ten Commandments: (Ex.20:1-17, Deut.5:6-21)

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

1. You shall have no false gods. This means we worship only the true God, especially through prayer, and do not give greater love to anything else.

2. You shall not take God's name in vain. Use God's name only with reverence.

3. Keep the Sabbath holy. Attend mass on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation, and abstain from unnecessary physical labor on Sunday.

4. Honor your father and mother. Love, help, respect, and obey your parents.

5. You shall not kill. We must take care of our bodies, and not unjustly injure others physically or verbally. (Mt.5:21-26). Alcohol and drug abuse is sinful (Gal.5:21). We are allowed to defend ourselves; however, killing out of vengeance is wrong. Abortion is murdering innocent life. (Lk. 1:15,41,44, Ps.139:13, Is.13:18)

6. You shall not commit adultery. This commandment forbids all sexual sins, adultery, fornication (pre-marital sex) (Gal.5:16-24, 1Cor.6:15-20, Eph.5:5-6, Mt. 15:19, Rev.22:15), impure thoughts, pornography (Ps.101:3, Matt.5:27, Ezek.16:25), and immodest dress (Is.3:16-24, 1 Tim.2:9-10, 1Pt.3:1-6), masturbation, and homosexual acts. (Gen.19:1-29, Rom.1:24-27, 1Cor.6:10, 1Tim.1:10) Contraception (Artificial Birth Control) violates the natural design intended by God for sexuality, for God created conjugal relations to be life-giving and love-giving. Contraception unnaturally separates the two goods of marriage-- life (procreation) and love (union) (Gen.1:28, Ps.127:3-5, Gen.38:8-10).

7. You shall not steal. If one steals one must make restitution and return the property as soon as possible, or give to the poor. However, one can take food to survive when in danger of starvation.

8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Lying, calumny (telling the faults of someone that are untrue), and detraction (unnecessarily revealing someone's true faults) are wrong.

9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. This teaches that willful and deliberate impure thoughts are sinful. (Mt.5:27-28)

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. The virtue of detachment is needed to obey this commandment. Scripture warns against attachment to wealth (Mt.19:16-30, Lk.6:20-26,12:13-31, Jam.5:1-6).

The Six Precepts of the Church

1. To attend Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of obligation.
2. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.
3. To confess our sins at least once a year.
- 4.To receive Holy Communion during the Easter Season.
- 5.To contribute to the support of the Church. (Give alms according to your income to your local church, charities, and missionaries)
- 6.To observe the laws of the Church regarding marriage (Be married only with the Church's permission).

Holy Days of Obligation

All Sundays as well as: December 8 -- Immaculate Conception, Jan.1 -- Solemnity of Mary, August 15 -- Assumption of Mary, Nov.1 -- All Saints Day, Ascension Thursday -- 40 days after Easter, and Dec.25 --Christmas.

Sins Against the Holy Spirit

1.Presumption. 2.Despair. 3.Resisting the known truth. 4.Envy of another's spiritual good. 5.Obstinacy in sin. 6.Final impenitence.

Virtue: A good habit; a habit of doing good and avoiding evil.

Vice: A bad habit; a habit of sin.

7 Virtues: humility, chastity, detachment, meekness, temperance, brotherly love, diligence.

7 Vices: Pride, lust, avarice, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth.

The 3 Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Love. (1Cor.13:13)

The Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice.

The Cross

The cross is the condition of Christ's discipleship. It includes all the suffering and hardship involved in resisting temptation, keeping the commandments, and doing the physical and spiritual works of mercy. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Lk.9:23, 1Cor.1:18)

Concupiscence

Concupiscence is the inclination toward sin that our nature possesses as a result of original sin. We must struggle to do good with the help of God's grace (Gen.6:5,8:21, Mt.16:41, Rom.7:23,8:6, Gal.5:17).

Temptation

Temptation is the lure of sin which comes from the world, the flesh, and the devil (1John2:15-17). Temptation is not a sin. In fact, if we are tempted, it is a sign that we have not yet sinned. When we are tempted, we should remember to pray, and think about the four last things: death, judgement, heaven, and hell (Mt.26:41). We are not tempted beyond our strength, provided we pray to God for help (1Cor.10:13, Gen.4:6,7).

Faith and Works

Faith is belief in God, and faith is necessary for salvation (Heb.11:6). "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb.11:1, 1Jn.5:4,5). God requires works to accompany faith: (Jam.2:14-26, Mt.5:17-22, 7:21-23, 16:27, 19:16-19, 25:31-46, Dan.4:24, Rev.3:2, 14:13, 20:13, 1Jn.2:4, Eph.5:5-7, Gal.5:16-21). "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Mt.7:21) "If you would enter life, keep the commandments." (Mt.19:17-19) "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead...You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead." (Jam.2:14-26)

We have a firm hope and confidence of salvation through our faith in Christ (Rom.10:9,10, Jn.3:16,5:24, 11:26,17:3); however, we cannot be absolutely certain we are saved -- we must hope for the grace of final perseverance (Mt.10:22, 24:13, 1Cor.4:3-5, 9:26-27,10:12, Phil.2:12, 3:10-16, Jn.15:6, Heb.6:11-12,10:26, 2Tim.2:12-13, Ezek.33:12-20, Rom.5:2, 8:24-25). A person can receive the gift of salvation through sanctifying grace, and then lose it through mortal sin.(1Jn.5:16-17, Jn.15:6)

14 Good Works of Love and Mercy

The 7 Corporal Works of Mercy (Mt.25:34-40): Feed the hungry. Give drink to the thirsty. Clothe the naked. Shelter the homeless. Visit the sick. Visit the imprisoned. Bury the dead.

The 7 Spiritual Works of Mercy: Counsel the doubtful (1Thess.5:9-11), Instruct the ignorant (Acts 8:35-39), Convert or admonish the sinner (Acts2:40-41, Jam.5:19,20), Comfort the sorrowful (Rom.12:15), Forgive all injuries (Mat.18:21,22), Bear wrongs patiently (1Cor.13:5), Pray for the living and the dead. (Jam.5:16, 2Mac.12:46)

Part IV: Prayer

What is Prayer? Prayer is lifting our hearts and minds to God. Prayer is conversation with God. "Prayer is the key of Heaven" St. Augustine.

Why do we pray? We pray so that we can go to Heaven. St. Augustine says: “As our body cannot live without nourishment, so our soul cannot spiritually be kept alive without prayer.” St. Alphonsus says: “He who prays, is saved; he who prays not, is damned!” Prayer is powerful: “Those who trust in you cannot be put to shame.”(Dan.3:40) “The unceasing prayer of a just man is of great avail.” (Jam.5:16-18, 2 Kings 20:1-6, Joshua 10:12-14, Daniel 6).

Where do we pray? We may pray at home in our room (Mt.6:1-6, Mk.1:35), at Church with our family (Mt.21:13) or anywhere. Through prayer, we can sanctify idle moments, we can pray while walking in a park, riding in a car or bus, and give that extra free time to God.

The Four Main Purposes of Prayer

1. **Adoration:** Proper worship of God due to Him as our Creator.
2. **Thanksgiving:** Gratefulness to God for His gifts to us.
3. **Reparation:** To obtain pardon for sins and do penance.
4. **Petition:** To ask for spiritual and physical goods.

The Seven Main Qualities of Prayer

1. **Devotion** (Matt.15:8)
2. **Fervor** (Lk.22:43,44)
3. **Perseverance** (Lk.11:5-10, 18:1-8, Matt.24:13)
4. **Humility** (Jam.4:6, Matt.6:1-6, Lk.18:9-14)
5. **Attention:** How can we expect God to listen to our prayer if we are not paying attention to it? (Matt.6:7,8) Some degree of involuntary distraction in prayer is inevitable, but we should try to minimize it.
6. **Faith:** “Those who trust in you cannot be put to shame.” (Dan.3:40; Mt. 19:26, Heb.11:6)
7. **Right Priority:** When we pray we need to have the right priority, namely that of God’s will over our own (Lk.22:42, Mt.6:31-33, Mt.16:26). Does God always answer our prayers? Yes. There are three answers to prayer -- yes, no, and wait. No prayer is unanswered, and no prayer is unheard.

We should pray at least 15 to 20 minutes every day. Since God is the most important Person in our life, we should speak to Him every day. We spend far more time each day pursuing recreation than we do in strengthening our relationship with God. Our soul is more important than our body. And God is certainly more important than anyone or anything else in our life. He deserves a priority of time. "Pray always" (Lk.18:1, 1Thess. 5:17, Eph. 6:18).