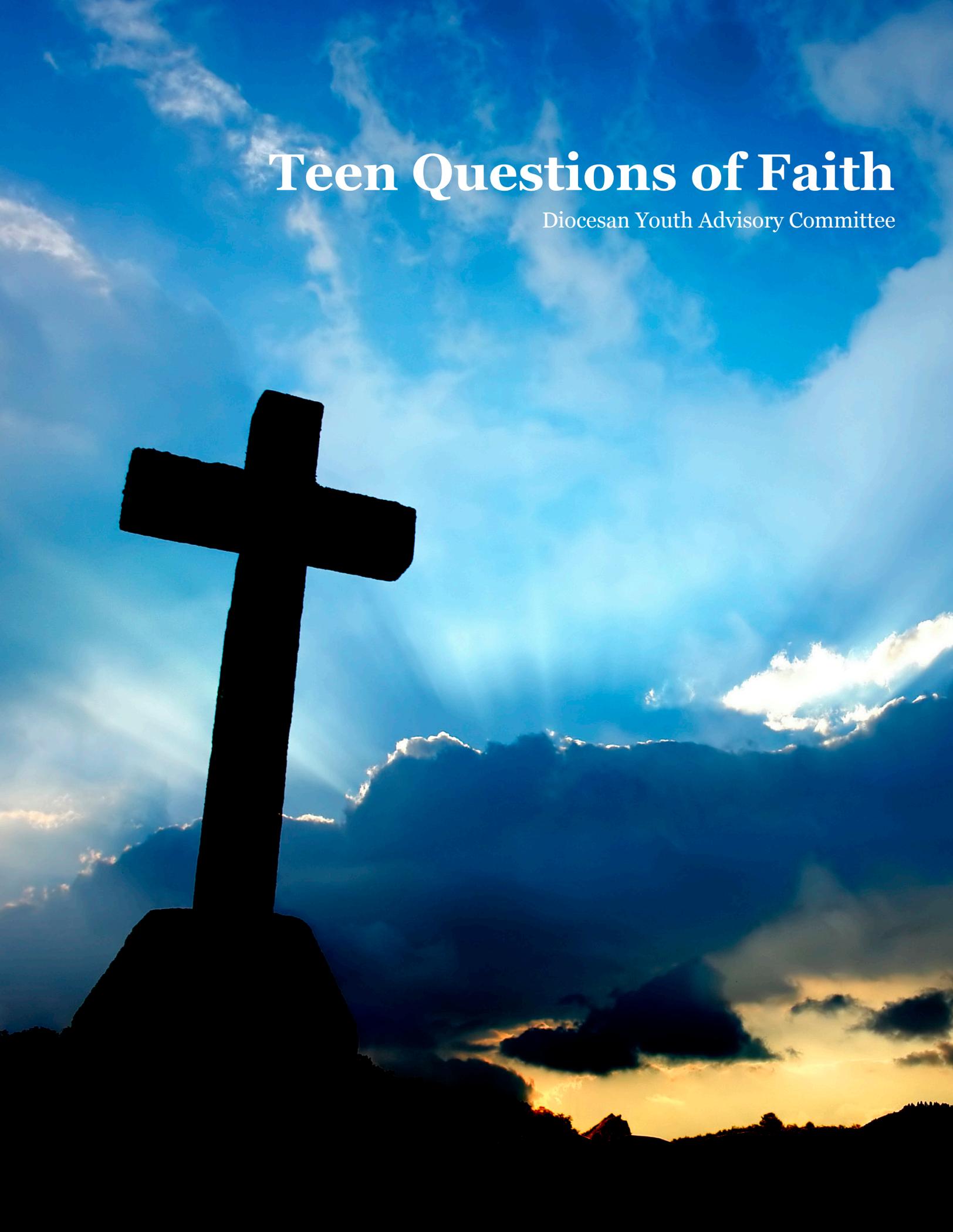


Teen Questions of Faith

Diocesan Youth Advisory Committee





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The following collection of teen questions and responses are intended for Coordinators of Youth Ministry and other adult leaders ministering with teens. The compilation of the questions was the work of the teen members of the Diocesan Youth Advisory Committee: Audrey Kahler, Rafael Meszaros, Monica Purdy, Abby Cook, Evangline Reedy, Keegan Pabst, Ellen Christie, Makayla Putnam, Luke St. Pierre, Macauley Rybar, Ana Jo Androsky. They are assisted by Pat Rinker and Teresa Hurd.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) references and scriptural references make up the primary content of the answers in order to insure that the answers are fully and truly the truth, the teaching of the Church. The idea for this project developed from their youth committee applications. On them the applicants expressed their concerns for youth today. Consistent in their replies were:

1. Lack of Catholic identity (Want to defend the faith to others, but lack the knowledge or tools to do so.)
2. Address issues in the Church teens have questions on.

Committee members went back to their youth ministry groups asking them what questions they have. Many of the groups researched replies. Their work was brought to our January meeting and compilation of these questions of faith was done for the benefit of our teens.

We hope this work is of assistance to our teens and those who minister with them as we seek to strengthen their Catholic identity and address the questions of faith they have.

Sincerely,

Patrick Rinker
Director of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries

Your Questions

1. What is the definition of sacrament?
2. Why are babies baptized if they really don't understand that they are accepting Jesus and the Catholic faith into their lives?
3. How does holy water get holy?
4. Why do Catholics express their sins to a priest?
5. Why do Catholics celebrate Mass?
6. How do Catholics know that Reconciliation really works?
7. Why do Catholics call their priest Father?
8. Why do Catholics need to be baptized?
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10. Where do ashes come from?
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12. What does scripture really mean to Catholics?
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40. Where did the ringing of the bells by the altar servers originate?
41. How do I reconcile with God after I have committed a serious sin?
42. Why is Harry Potter considered “satanic”, but Lord of the Rings isn’t?
43. What do I do when someone is going down the wrong path? How do I help them?
44. How do I regain faith when it’s so hard to believe?

1. What is the definition of sacrament?

CCC 774

The Greek word *mysterion* was translated into Latin by two terms: *mysterium* and *sacramentum*. In later usage the term *sacramentum* emphasizes a visible sign of the hidden reality of salvation which was indicated in the term *mysterium*. In this sense, Christ himself is the mystery of salvation....The seven sacraments are signs and instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ, the head, throughout the Church, His body....”

Scriptural evidence or references for each sacrament include:

Baptism: MT 28:18-20

Confirmation: Acts 2:1-4, Acts 8:14-17

Eucharist: MT 26:26-29, 1 Cor 11:23-29

Holy Orders: Acts 1:21-23, 1 Timothy 3:1-13

Marriage: Mark 10:2-9, JN 2:1-11, site of Jesus first public miracle, Col 3:12-21,

GN 2:18-24

Sacrament of Healing: James 5:13-16

Reconciliation: JN 20:21-22, MT 16:13-20, 2 Cor 5:16-21

2. Why are babies baptized if they really don't understand that they are accepting Jesus and the Catholic faith into their lives?

CCC 790

“Believers who respond to God’s word and become members of Christ’s Body, become intimately united with Him...” Baptism unites us to Christ and his Church.

CCC 1252

The practice of infant baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony of this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole “households” received baptism, infants may also have been baptized. Acts 16:15

Throughout the old testament references to household included all members, daughters and sons, GN 36:6, Ex. 12:3-4,

Parents of infants can understand and live the values that the Catholic Church believes in and pass them on to their children. Also, baptism accepts the child into a community of support and love, in which as Christ body, they receive His grace.

3. How does holy water get holy?

A priest prays over the water and by the grace of the Holy Spirit it becomes holy.

4. Why do Catholics express their sins to a priest?

Jesus instituted a sacrament in which a sinner can have their sins resolved. By sinning, you don't just drift apart from Jesus, but you also drift further away from the members of the parish. By confessing your sins, you can be reconciled.

JN 20:21-22, MT 16:13-20, 2 Cor 5:16-21

The Church is called to the ministry of Reconciliation, 2 Cor 5:16-21

CCC 1441

Only God forgives sins. Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, “The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins” and exercises his divine authority: “your sins are forgiven.” Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.

5. Why do Catholics celebrate Mass?

Luke 22:19

“Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.’”

CCC 1341

“The command of Jesus to repeat his actions and words ‘until he comes’ does not only ask us to remember Jesus and what he did. It is directed at the liturgical celebration, by the apostles and their successors, the memorial of Christ, of his life, of his death, of his Resurrection, and of his intercession in the presence of the Father.”

CCC 1343

“It (the Eucharist) remains the center of the Church’s life.”

CCC 1344

“Thus from celebration to celebration, as they proclaim the Paschal mystery of Jesus ‘until he comes,’ the pilgrim People of God advances, ‘following the narrow way of the cross,’ toward the heavenly banquet, when all the elect will be seated at the table of the kingdom.”

6. How do Catholics know that Reconciliation really works?

Leviticus 4:20

“Thus the priest shall make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven.”

CCC 1424

“It is called the sacrament of forgiveness, since by the priest’s sacramental absolution God grants the penitent ‘pardon and peace.’”

This authority to forgive sins was granted by Jesus himself. JN 20:21-22, MT 16:13-20

7. Why do Catholic’s call their priest Father?

CCC 1549

Through the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers. In the beautiful expression of St. Ignatius of Antioch, the bishop is typos tou Patros; he is like the living image of God the Father.”

Catholic’s call the priest father because reflects the love of our heavenly Father. In the bible, Jesus refers to Abraham as Father Abraham. The title basically just gives the Priest authority and special meaning.

8. Why do Catholics need to be baptized?

John 3:5

“Jesus answered, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.’”

Romans 6:4

“We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.”

CCC 1279

The fruit of Baptism, of baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact, the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ.

9. Why is Lent only celebrated by some Christian churches/mostly just Catholics?

Most Christian Churches do not observe the Church calendar. The seasons were omitted along with most of the sacraments and the use of liturgy following the Reformation.

CCC 1163

“Holy Mother Church believes we should celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse in a sacred commemoration on certain days throughout the course of the year...Thus recalling the mysteries of redemption, she opens up to the faithful the riches of her Lord’s powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present in every age; the faithful lay hold of them and are filled with saving grace.”

10. Where do ashes come from?

They are made with blessed palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday.

11. How can we make more people Catholic (evangelization)?

Living the word of the bible and being positive toward others. Mimicking the behaviors of Jesus and the Saints is a great way to inspire others! “The Church exists in order to evangelize; that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God and to perpetuate Christ’s sacrifice of the Mass.”

Evangelii Nuntiandi pp14

“People listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and when they listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. It is therefore primarily by the Church’s conduct, by living witness and fidelity to the Lord Jesus, that the Church will evangelize the world.”

Evangelii Nuntiandi pp41

12. What does scripture really mean to Catholics?

Luke 1:3

“I too have decided, after investigating everything accurately anew, to write it down in an orderly sequence for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may realize the certainty of the teachings you have received.”

CCC 102

“Through all the words of Sacred Scripture, God speaks only one single Word, his one Utterance in whom he expresses himself completely.”

CCC 103

“For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord’s Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of God’s Word and Christ’s Body.”

CCC 104

“In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, ‘but as what it really is, the word of God.’ In the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them.”

13. What is the Catholic Church's view on divorce?

Luke 16:18

“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery”

CCC 2384

“Divorce is a grave offense against the natural law. It claims to break the contract, to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other till death.”

CCC 2385

“Divorce is immoral also because it introduces disorder into the family and into society. This disorder brings grave harm to the deserted spouse, to children traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them, and because of its contagious effect which makes it truly a plague on society.”

CCC 2386

It can happen that one of the spouses is the innocent victim of a divorced decreed by civil law; this spouse therefore has not contravened the moral law. There is a considerable difference between a spouse who has sincerely tried to be faithful to the sacrament of marriage and is unjustly abandoned, and one who through his own grave fault destroys a canonically valid marriage.

14. What is an annulment?

An annulment declares that a marriage is not a valid sacrament and therefore for reasons of free consent, free of eternal coercion, and not impeded by natural or ecclesial law.

For full teaching of Church see CCC 1625-1629.

15. What is the Catholic Church's view on homosexuality?

Romans 1:26-27

“Their females exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the males likewise gave up natural relations with females and burned with lust for one another...and thus received the due penalty for their perversity.”

CCC 2357

Basing itself on sacred scripture, which presents homosexual acts as acts of depravity, tradition has always declared that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered. They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from the genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved.”

CCC 2358

The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. They do not choose their homosexual condition; for most of them it is a trial. They must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity....”

16. How was Mary able to live a sinless life?

Luke 1:28

“And coming to her, he (the angel Gabriel) said, ‘Hail favored one! The Lord is with you.’”

CCC 411

“Mary benefited first of all and uniquely from Christ's victory over sin: she was preserved from all stain of original sin and by a special grace of God committed no sin of any kind during her whole earthly life.”

CCC 490

“In fact, in order for Mary to be able to give free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly borne by God's grace.”

17. Why did Jesus come to earth as a child?

Mathew 1:23

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,’ which means ‘God is with us.”

John 1:14

“The word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Hebrews 4:14-16

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.”

CCC 526

“To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom. For this, we must humble ourselves and become little.”

CCC 470

“... The Son of God...worked with human hands; he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like us in all things except sin.”

18. Did Jesus raise himself from the dead?

Romans 10:9

“For, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 8:11

“If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.”

John 10:17-18

“This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father.”

CCC 648

“Christ’s Resurrection is an object of faith in that it is a transcendent intervention of God himself in creation and history. In it the three divine persons act together as one, and manifest their own proper characteristics. The Father’s power ‘raised up’ Christ his Son and by doing so perfectly introduced his Son’s humanity, including his body, into the Trinity.”

19. What’s the difference between Catholics and Christians?

Catholics are Christians who trace their practices, teachings and beliefs back to Jesus himself and his apostles. Our life of prayer, our celebration of the Mass, the holy scriptures are all a result of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit from generation to generation in the Church. Other Christians can only claim this truth to the degree that they share in the sacramental life of the Church as given to us by Jesus and passed down from the apostles to us today. The Catholic Church truly displays the four marks of the Church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

CCC 838

“The Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are by name Christian, but do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety or have not perceived unity of communion under the successor of Peter...”

20. What is the Holy Spirit?

John 16:13

“But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming.”

John 14:16-17

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees it nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.”

CCC 685

“To believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, consubstantial with the Father and the Son”

CCC 686

“The Holy Spirit is at work with the Father and the Son from the beginning to the completion of the plan for our salvation.”

21. If we are saved through Baptism, then why do we need to go to confession?

Salvation does begin with Baptism but it is obtained throughout our life lived out in faith through the benefit of our membership in the Church and participation in its sacraments, including Reconciliation.

John 20:22-23

“And when he said this, he breathed on them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven, and whose sins you retain are retained.’”

2 Cor 5:17-21

So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

CCC 1425

“And the Lord himself taught us to pray: ‘Forgive us our trespasses,’ linking our forgiveness of one another’s offenses to the forgiveness of our sins that God will grant us.”

CCC 1213

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to the life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments....”

CCC 1212

...By means of these sacraments of initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.

CCC 161

Believing in Jesus Christ and in the One who sent him for our salvation is necessary for obtaining that salvation. Since without faith it is impossible to please God and to attain to the fellowship of his sons, therefore without faith no one has ever attained justification, nor will anyone obtain eternal life, but he who endures to the end.

22. Why should I be confirmed?

Confirmation is a time to take on your faith as you own, not your parents'. Through this you must allow the Holy Spirit to work in you and through you.

CCC 1298

When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, as is the case in the Roman Rite, the Liturgy of Confirmation begins with the renewal of Baptismal promises and the profession of faith by the confirmands....

CCC 1299

In the Roman Rite the bishop extends his hands over the whole group of the confirmands. Since the time of the apostles this gesture signified the gift of the Holy Spirit...

CCC 1302

It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.

23. If God created everything, did he create evil?

Evil is the lack of good. God did not create evil because evil is not something, it is the lack of something. Adam and Eve brought evil into the world when they committed the first sin.

CCC 319

God created the world to show forth and communicate His glory. That his creatures should share in his truth, goodness, and beauty – this is the glory for which God created them.

CCC 324

The fact the God permits physical and even moral evil is a mystery that God illuminates by His Son Jesus Christ who died and rose to vanquish evil. Faith gives us certainty that God would not permit an evil if he did not cause a good to come from that very evil, by ways that we shall fully know I eternal life.

Romans 8:28-30

We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the first-born among many brothers. And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.

24. Why is mass an important part of being a Catholic?

1 Cor 11:23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. Quite simply Jesus said do this in memory of him and we still do while many other Christian congregations do not. This has been the practice of the Church since the formation of the very first community:

Acts 2:42

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

CCC 1343

It was above all on "the first day of the week", Sunday, the day of Jesus resurrection, that the Christians met "to break bread" From that time on down to our own day the celebration of the Eucharist has been continued so that today we encounter it everywhere in the Church with the same fundamental structure. It remains the center of the Church's life.

25. Why do Catholics believe that their church is the true church of Jesus Christ?

Because theirs is the Church that goes back in history to the time of Christ “Where the Bishop is, there let the multitude of believers be; even as where Jesus is, there is the catholic church.” It is truly one holy, catholic, and apostolic.

CCC 811

“This is the sole Church of Christ, which in the Creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic.”²⁵⁶ These four characteristics, inseparably linked with each other²⁵⁷ indicate essential features of the Church and her mission. The Church does not possess them of herself; it is Christ who, through the Holy Spirit, makes his Church one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, and it is he who calls her to realize each of these qualities. It was Jesus prayer on the night of the last supper that his followers would remain one in Him and that is the goal and hope of ecumenical dialogue among leaders of various Christian congregations today. There is only one Church. To the degree to each of these congregations and their members share in sacraments of the Church, are they members of it.

John 17:20-21

“I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.

CCC 813

The Church is one because of her source: “the highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity, in the Trinity of Persons, of one God, the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.”²⁵⁹ The Church is one because of her founder: for “the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross, . . . restoring the unity of all in one people and one body.”²⁶⁰ The Church is one because of her “soul”: “It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in Christ that he is the principle of the Church’s unity.”²⁶¹ Unity is of the essence of the Church:

26. Why do Catholics believe in a place between Heaven and Hell called purgatory? Where is purgatory mentioned in the bible?

CCC 1031 & 1032

The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.⁶⁰⁶ The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:⁶⁰⁷

This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: “Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.”⁶⁰⁹ From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.⁶¹⁰ The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.

Phil 1:6

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.

1 Cor 3:13

The work of each will come to light, for the Day will disclose it. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire [itself] will test the quality of each one’s work. (the greek word for fire is pur, the root word for purgatory).

27. Why can't women be priests?

At the most basic level, the answer is simple: the new testament priesthood of Christ himself.

CCC 1548

In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, high priest of the redemptive sacrifice, Teacher of Truth. This is what the Church means by saying that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts in persona Christi Capitis. The Church maintains that in so much as Jesus chose only men to be his apostles that we continue led by his example.

CCC 1577

“Only a baptized man (vir) validly receives sacred ordination.”⁶⁶ The Lord Jesus chose men (viri) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry.⁶⁷ The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible.

28. Why is Eucharist kept in the tabernacle?

It's kept in there so that the blessed sacrament can be brought to the sick and dying outside the time of mass.

CCC 1379

The tabernacle was first intended for the reservation of the Eucharist in a worthy place so that it could be brought to the sick and those absent outside of Mass. As faith in the real presence of Christ in his Eucharist deepened, the Church became conscious of the meaning of silent adoration of the Lord present under the Eucharistic species. It is for this reason that the tabernacle should be located in an especially worthy place in the church and should be constructed in such a way that it emphasizes and manifests the truth of the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

29. Why do Catholics believe that God is three persons, called the Holy trinity? How can God be three persons and still be God?

Catholics believe there is one God consisting of three distinct and equal divine persons- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the new testament Matthew 28:19, God the son commanded the apostles to baptize saying, “in the name of the Father, of the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

John 1:1,14

In the beginning was the word, the word was with God and was God, the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

CCC 234

The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the “hierarchy of the truths of faith”.⁵□ The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men “and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin”.

30. What are the parts of the Mass?

The four main parts of the mass are:

The Gathering Rite with:

Opening Song, Greeting, Penitential Rite, and Opening Prayer

Liturgy of the Word with:

First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation, Gospel, Homily, and General Intercessions. On Sundays and feast days there is a second reading between the Psalm and Gospel Acclamation.

Liturgy of the Eucharist with:

Presentation of Gifts, Presentation Song, Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Lord's Prayer, Sign of Peace, Lamb of God, Communion, Communion Song, and Prayer after Communion.

Concluding Rite

Greeting, Final Blessing, Dismissal, Closing Song

31. Is there a purpose behind the placement of the four hymns in mass?

(From CatholicCulture.org, quoting the GIRM) the Roman Missal (GIRM) gives conferences authority to approve texts of hymns to be sung at the liturgy. For example 48 (as adapted in 2002 by the USCCB) says:

... In the dioceses of the United States of America there are four options for the Entrance Chant: (1) the antiphon from the Roman Missal or the Psalm from the Roman Gradual as set to music there or in another musical setting; (2) the seasonal antiphon and Psalm of the Simple Gradual; (3) a song from another collection of psalms and antiphons, approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop, including psalms arranged in responsorial or metrical forms; (4) a suitable liturgical song similarly approved by the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop.

The General Instruction to the Roman Missal makes reference here to the processional hymn. There are four occurrences of procession during the liturgy in which a hymn is often sung, the entrance, the procession of the gifts to the altar, for the reception of communion, and the recession at the end of Mass.

32. Why was it necessary to change the words of the mass, will it happen again?

The new translation of the Roman Missal, which includes the words of the Mass, has many guiding principles. Two were to be more literal in reference to the scriptures and to its translation from the Latin. The official translation for people of all languages is Latin. When the Church produces a document it, is done in Latin first and then translated to other languages. Being more literal to this translation and to the scriptures guards the truth of what we pray. And yes, it will happen again. One of the things addressed in the new translation were the prayers for the saints of the day. There have been many saints canonized since the last translation who are now included in the new sacramentary.

33. Why don't Catholics eat meat on Fridays during Lent?

CCC 1438

The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent, and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church's penitential practice.³⁶ These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works).

Fasting and abstaining have long been forms of prayer that we find in both the old and new testaments. The act of self denial is a form of discipline as Christ's disciples identifying ourselves with his sacrifice for us. This act of self denial as an act of penance help to form us as disciples of Christ.

34. What is the difference between apostles and disciples?

The apostles were the original chosen disciples of Jesus. The foundation upon which the Church has revolved and continues in their successors, our bishops today.

CCC 857

The Church is apostolic because she is founded on the apostles, in three ways:

- she was and remains built on “the foundation of the Apostles,”³⁶² the witnesses chosen and sent on mission by Christ himself;³⁶³
- with the help of the Spirit dwelling in her, the Church keeps and hands on the teaching,³⁶⁴ the “good deposit,” the salutary words she has heard from the apostles;³⁶⁵
- she continues to be taught, sanctified, and guided by the apostles until Christ’s return, through their successors in pastoral office: the college of bishops, “assisted by priests, in union with the successor of Peter, the Church’s supreme pastor”;³⁶⁶

35. What is the difference between reconciliation and confession?

Confession is the disclosure of our sins as part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

CCC 1455

The confession (or disclosure) of sins, even from a simply human point of view, frees us and facilitates our reconciliation with others. Through such an admission man looks squarely at the sins he is guilty of, takes responsibility for them, and thereby opens himself again to God and to the communion of the Church in order to make a new future possible.

36. Is there a reason why we stand, kneel and sit for different parts of the mass?

The following are excerpts from Bishop Paul S. Loverde posted on the Catholic exchange website. It gives example to the fact that each gesture we do during liturgy carries with a meaning that reflects on attitude of reverence appropriate to that moment in our prayer together. The General Instruction also draws attention to the bowing of the head at certain times during the Mass. “An inclination of the head should be made when the three Divine Persons are named, at the name of Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the Saint in whose honor the Mass is celebrated” (GIRM 275).

During the Communion Rite, the bishops of the United States have determined that the norm for reception of Holy Communion in the dioceses of the United States is standing. However, communicants should not be denied Holy Communion because they kneel. Rather, such instances should be addressed pastorally, by providing the faithful with proper catechesis on the reasons for this norm (GIRM 160, USA Adaptations). Further, when receiving Holy Communion, we are asked to make a bow of the head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand at the discretion of each communicant. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence (bowing the head) is also made before receiving the Precious Blood (GIRM 160, USA Adaptations).

37. How do the bread and body become flesh and blood?

CCC 1377

The Eucharistic presence of Christ begins at the moment of the consecration and endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist. Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species and whole and entire in each of their parts, in such a way that the breaking of the bread does not divide Christ. The words of consecration are spoken during the Eucharistic prayer.

38. What is the structure of the Catholic Church?

CCC 873

The very differences which the Lord has willed to put between the members of his body serve its unity and mission. For “in the Church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name and by his power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ; they have therefore, in the Church and in the world, their own assignment in the mission of the whole People of God.”³⁸⁷ Finally, “from both groups [hierarchy and laity] there exist Christian faithful who are consecrated to God in their own special manner and serve the salvific mission of the Church through the profession of the evangelical counsels.”

Scriptural references speaking to the teaching authority of the Church and its structure include Acts 2:42-47, 1 Corinthians 12 & 14. Clearly established in scripture and continuing throughout the history of the Church is its structure and teaching authority. Evolving to accommodate its incredible growth it is essentially now, as it was in scripture, and has continue to be. The first Church council governing the teaching and practice of the Church took place in the book of Acts 15:1-12, “The apostles and the presbyters met together to see about this matter. After much debate had taken place, Peter got up and said to them, “My brothers, you are well aware that from early days God made his choice among you that through my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness by granting them the Holy Spirit just as he did us. He made no distinction between us and them, for by faith he purified their hearts. Why, then, are you now putting God to the test by placing on the shoulders of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they.” The whole assembly fell silent, and they listened while Paul and Barnabas described the signs and wonders God had worked among the Gentiles through them.”

39. Why do we make the sign of the cross on our heads, lips and heart before the Gospel reading?

As we cross ourselves we ask that God’s word be in our minds, on our lips and in our hearts. We are praying that the Gospel we are about to receive will transform us.

40. Where did the ringing of the bells by the altar servers originate?

The ringing of an altar bell began probably in the thirteenth century.[10] It is not mentioned in the original 1570 Roman Missal of Pope Pius V[11] and was not introduced into papal Masses until the time of Pope John Paul II.[10]

41. How do I reconcile with God after I have committed a serious sin?

We are all called to a life of reconciliation in order that we become the new creation that God called us to be. 2 Cor 5:17-18 “So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation” The truth is we all have sinned yet God still loves us, Romans 5:8 “But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Nothing can separate us from God’s love and God will always be for us no matter what we have done.” Romans 8: 31-39. “What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him? Who will bring a charge against God’s chosen ones? It is God who acquits us. Who will condemn? It is Christ [Jesus] who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? As it is written: “For your sake we are being slain all the day; we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things,* nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth,* nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

42. Why is Harry Potter considered “satanic”, but Lord of the Rings isn’t?

The following excerpt displays a couple of views from the Vatican press on Harry Potter. In the past there has been concern expressed but at the same time, as indicated here, there is much that the Vatican press lauded about this fictional work.

The Vatican’s official newspaper lauded Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince for its “clear” depiction of the eternal battle between good and evil represented by the struggle between Harry and his nemesis, the evil sorcerer Lord Voldemort.

L’Osservatore Romano said the movie was the best adaptation yet of the JK Rowling books, describing it as “a mixture of supernatural suspense and romance which reaches the right balance”.

“There is a clear line of demarcation between good and evil and [the film] makes clear that good is right. One understands as well that sometimes this requires hard work and sacrifice,” the newspaper judged.

The broadsheet paper also praised the film’s clear message that “the search for immortality epitomized by Lord Voldemort” was wrong. It even approved of the film’s treatment of adolescent romance amid the halls and corridors of Hogwart’s, saying that it achieved the “correct balance” and made the teenage stars more credible. The favorable review is an apparent change of heart from the Vatican’s previous assessment of the best-selling series. Last year an article in L’Osservatore Romano condemned the books for encouraging an interest in the occult among children.

43. What do I do when someone is going down the wrong path? How do I help them?

When I say to the wicked, “You wicked, you must die,” and you do not speak up to warn the wicked about their ways, they shall die in their sins, but I will hold you responsible for their blood. If, however, you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, but they do not, then they shall die in their sins, but you shall save your life. EZ 33:8-9. Throughout this chapter God lays out for the prophet his responsibility to warn those who are doing wrong to return to the Lord and live justly. This admonition continues in the gospel MT 18:15-18, the command for fraternal correction. We are also warned in MT 7:1-6, not to judge others, but to remove the plank from our own eye before we remove the speck from theirs.

If the situation is one in which serious harm could take place or it becomes a matter of legal issues then seek professional help. You could start with a school counselor, parish youth minister or another trusted adult.

44. How do I regain faith when it’s so hard to believe?

Hebrews 11:1-3 says that “Faith is the confidence in things hoped for the evidence of things unseen.” What gives you hope? Where do you see Christ in others? Return to these people, places and events. It could have been a meaningful experience of Reconciliation, a retreat, a group of faithful Christians that support your faith. Pray, seek God, and seek God with others. MT 7:7 says that if we seek we will find. John 15: 1-8 reminds us that separated from Christ and His Church we can lose our faith, our spiritual life. 1 Cor 12 talks about how the Church, the Body of Christ, is a support and help to us. Don’t go it alone. What helped you to believe? Start there and seek the support of your Church, your ministry leaders, your family, your Christian friends.