

Essentials of Catholic Faith With Christ as our cornerstone, an easy-to-read description of the basics teachings of our Catholic faith **Michael Heinlein**

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At an audience in Fall 2012, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said that faith “is an assent with which our mind and our heart say their “yes” to God, confessing that Jesus is Lord.” With Christ as the cornerstone, these are some basics of our Catholic faith:

The Holy Trinity

We become familiar with the Holy Trinity when we learn the Sign of the Cross. With it, we invoke our God who is three-in-one and one-in-three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each is a distinct person, yet each shares the same substance. Think of it as water, which exists as liquid, steam and ice – three forms of the same substance. We believe our God exists from heaven and we seek unity with him.

Divine Revelation

All of us want to know from where we come and why we exist. God (the Father and Creator) has given us the answers by sharing with us all essential truths about Himself. These events in the history of our salvation, known as Divine Revelation, are recorded in the Bible, especially through the writings of the Prophets. God’s most basic revelation is that He created to be in relationship with Him. Revelation reaches its climax in Jesus Christ, who gives us the fullness of knowledge of God, made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ and the Paschal Mystery

Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God, the Word made flesh. The Father sent him into the world to redeem mankind from sin. Jesus made salvation possible for all through his sacrifice, and enabled us to share life with God. Jesus accomplished all this through his passion, death and resurrection, which corporately are referred to as the Paschal Mystery. Each Christian enters into and shares in that mystery through baptism, when they become members of the Body of Christ.

The Catholic Church

The Church is a family of believers also called the Body of Christ. Four marks define the Church: one, holy, catholic and apostolic. It earns the name “Catholic,” which means “universal,” because the Gospel message is universally applicable to all mankind. The Church carries out Christ’s work of teaching, sanctifying and governing the faithful. At the service of the faithful is the hierarchy: the pope and all the bishops of the world (assisted by the priests and deacons of their dioceses).

Sacraments

Jesus invites us to form a personal relationship with him through the Church. The baptized are united with him through the celebration of the sacraments, which supply the grace we need for Christian living. We are initiated into the Body of Christ by sharing in Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. We receive Christ's healing remedy through Confession and Anointing. And, like Christ, we live sacrificially by serving others through Matrimony and Holy Orders. The "source and summit" of the Christian faith is the Sacrament of Eucharist, commonly called the Mass.

The Mass

God's love redeemed us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Catholics respond by offering God praise, adoration, worship and thanksgiving in the Eucharist (which means "thanksgiving"). Also called the Mass, it's celebrated by a bishop or priest and consists of two main parts. The Liturgy of the Word celebrates God's marvels through the proclamation of the Word. The Liturgy of the Eucharist celebrates the work of our redemption and salvation. In the re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice, we offer gifts of bread and wine, which are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. We receive these gifts and, conformed to Jesus, go forth proclaiming his Gospel.

Communion of Saints

Catholics believe that all baptized persons are called to a life of holiness. Through this holiness, we seek entry to everlasting life with God, and those who have succeeded in this are called saints! In this way, we are all called to be saints! The Church holds up her Saints as inspiring role models of heroic virtue and holy living. The Blessed Virgin Mary is the primary example of holiness.

Blessed Virgin Mary

As the first to accept the Gospel, the Blessed Virgin Mary enabled Jesus to enter our humanity, helping make salvation possible. God prepared her for this role by sparing her from original sin through her Immaculate Conception, and lovingly God spared her from the results of sin and death by her glorious Assumption. Mary often is misunderstood by other Christians. Though many believe Catholics worship Mary, we don't. Rather, we honor her with profound respect and emulate her "yes" as we follow Jesus in faith.

The Last Things

The primary goal of the Christian is heaven and unity with God. We can attain a place in heaven by following Jesus, doing good and avoiding temptation. God doesn't assign anyone to hell; it's a place we choose by knowingly living contrary to the Gospel. We are urged to meditate on these things regularly so that we are prepared to face them when they come.

- See more at:

<https://www.osvparish.com/ResourceLibrary/BasicsoftheFaith/Article/TabId/1549/ArtMID/16450/ArticleID/15277/Essentials-of-Catholic-Faith.aspx#sthash.ZNWBvymH.dpuf>