

I Believe – A Summary of Basic Catholic Beliefs

From the very beginning of the Church, Catholics have shared a common set of beliefs. One of the best-known statements of these beliefs is found in the Apostles' Creed. As you prepare for Confirmation, you may wish to use the answers to these questions drawn from the Creed as a review and reminder of what we believe as Catholics.

1. What do Catholics believe about God?

We believe that God is the loving Creator of all that is and that each person is made in God's image and likeness.

2. How has God revealed himself to us?

God is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We call this belief in three divine Persons in one God the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

3. Where do we find God's revelation?

We find it in Scripture and tradition, in the Church's living tradition of faith.

4. How do we respond to God's ever-present love in our lives.

We respond to God's love through the gift of faith and by the way we live our lives.

5. What do Catholics believe about Jesus Christ?

We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who became one of us to free us from sin and to bring us the fullness of God's revelation. Jesus Christ is the Messiah, God's anointed One, the Savior of the world.

6. What is the mystery of the Incarnation?

Incarnation means the unity of divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ. It comes from a word meaning "the putting on or taking on of flesh." Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human.

7. Who is the Blessed Virgin Mary?

Mary is the Mother of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Some of the feasts on which we recall her part in God's plan are the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), the Birth of Mary (Sept. 8), the Annunciation (March 25), the Assumption (Aug. 15), Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12) and the feast of Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1).

8. How did Jesus free us from sin?

Jesus freed us from sin and brought us new life through his saving death and resurrection. In Jesus we receive grace, a sharing in God's life.

9. What is the paschal mystery?

We call the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus the paschal mystery.

10. What did Jesus promise on the night before he died?

Jesus promised that he would send a Helper to be with his disciples. This is the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit is also known as the Paraclete or Advocate.

11. When did Jesus' disciples first experience the Gift of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after Easter.

12. How are we initiated into the Catholic Church?

We are initiated into the Catholic Church through the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

13. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a visible and effective sign given to us by Christ, through which we share God's grace. There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

14. What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace is participation in the very life of God that brings us into an intimate and permanent relationship with the Blessed Trinity; we first receive this divine gift at Baptism.

15. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament in which we are freed from original sin, given a share in God's life, and welcomed as members of the Church.

16. What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the sacrament that strengthens and continues Baptism; in this sacrament we are sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

17. What is the sacramental sign of Confirmation?

The sacramental sign of Confirmation is the anointing with oil with the words, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

18. Who is the ordinary minister of Confirmation?

The bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation.

19. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, Lord and Giver of life.

20. What are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe.

21. What is chrism?

Chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balm blessed by the bishop.

22. What is the Eucharist?

The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ, who is truly present—body, blood, soul and divinity—under the appearances of bread and wine.

23. What is the Catholic Church?

The Catholic Church is the community of those who profess their belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, publicly affirm that belief through Baptism, celebrate it through the Eucharist, accept the teachings of Christ that have come down to us from the apostles, and carry out the sacramental life and mission of the Church under the leadership of the pope and those ordained in apostolic succession.

24. What are we called to do as members of the Church?

We are called to give witness to our faith in Jesus Christ through word and action. We are to be his presence in the world helping to fulfill his mission to bring all people to God.