

The Baltimore Catechism

Revised Edition (1941)

Contents

Part One: The Creed

The Purpose of Man's Existence.....	4
God and His Perfections.....	5
The Unity and Trinity of God.....	9
Creation and the Angels.....	11
The Creation and the Fall of Man.....	13
Actual Sin.....	15
The Incarnation.....	17
The Redemption.....	19
The Holy Ghost and Grace.....	22
The Virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.....	24
The Catholic Church.....	27
The Marks and Attributes of the Church.....	30
The Communion of Saints and the Forgiveness of Sins.....	34
The Resurrection and Life Everlasting.....	36

Part Two: The Commandments

The Two Great Commandments.....	39
The First Commandment of God.....	42
Honoring the Saints, Relics, and Images.....	45
The Second and Third Commandments of God.....	47
The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Commandments of God.....	50
The Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments of God.....	53
The Commandments of the Church; The First and Second Commandments.....	56
The Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Commandments of the Church.....	58

Part Three: The Sacraments and Prayer

The Sacraments.....	61
Baptism.....	63
Confirmation.....	65
The Holy Eucharist.....	67
The Sacrifice of the Mass.....	69
Holy Communion.....	71
Penance.....	74
Contrition.....	76

Confession.....	79
How to Make a Good Confession.....	82
Temporal Punishment and Indulgences.....	84
Extreme Unction and Holy Orders.....	85
Matrimony.....	88
The Sacramentals.....	90
Prayer.....	91
The Our Father.....	94

Part One: The Creed

The Purpose of Man's Existence

Lesson 1 from the Baltimore Catechism

1. Who made us?

God made us.

In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. (Genesis 1:1)

2. Who is God?

God is the Supreme Being, infinitely perfect, who made all things and keeps them in existence.

In him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:28)

3. Why did God make us?

God made us to show forth His goodness and to share with us His everlasting happiness in heaven.

Eye has not seen nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him. (I Corinthians 2:9)

4. What must we do to gain the happiness of heaven?

To gain the happiness of heaven we must know, love, and serve God in this world.

Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth; where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. (Matthew 6:19-20)

5. From whom do we learn to know, love, and serve God?

We learn to know, love, and serve God from Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who teaches us through the Catholic Church.

I have come a light into the world that whoever believes in Me may not remain in darkness. (John 12:46)

6. Where do we find the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church?

We find the chief truths taught by Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church in the Apostles' Creed.

He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me. (Luke 10:16)

7. Say the Apostles' Creed.

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 Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

God and His Perfections

Lesson 2 from the Baltimore Catechism

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth ..."

8. What do we mean when we say that God is the Supreme Being?

When we say that God is the Supreme Being we mean that He is above all creatures, the self-existing and infinitely perfect Spirit.

I am the First, and I am the Last, and besides me there is no God. (Isaiah 44:6)

9. What is a spirit?

A spirit is a being that has understanding and free will, but no body, and will never die.

To whom then have you likened God? Or what image will you make for Him? (Isaiah 40:18)

10. What do we mean when we say that God is self-existing?

When we say that God is self-existing we mean that He does not owe His existence to any other being.

I am who am. (Exodus 3:14)

11. What do we mean when we say that God is infinitely perfect?

When we say that God is infinitely perfect we mean that He has all perfections without limit.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and of his greatness there is no end. (Psalm 144:3)

12. What are some of the perfections of God?

Some of the perfections of God are: God is eternal, all-good, all-knowing, all-present, and almighty.

13. What do we mean when we say that God is eternal?

When we say that God is eternal we mean that He always was and always will be, and always remains the same. "

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. (Apocalypse 1:8)

14. What do we mean when we say that God is all-good?

When we say that God is all-good we mean that He is infinitely lovable in Himself, and that from His fatherly love every good comes to us.

For the word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done with faithfulness. He loveth mercy and judgment: the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord. (Psalm 32:4-5)

15. What do we mean when we say that God is all-knowing?

When we say that God is all-knowing we mean that He knows all things, past, present, and future, even our most secret thoughts, words, and actions.

Behold, O Lord, thou hast known all things, the last and those of old: thou hast formed me, and hast laid thy hand upon me. Thy knowledge is become wonderful to me: it is high, and I cannot reach it. (Psalm 138:5-6)

16. What do we mean when that God is all-present?

When we say that God is all-present we mean that He is everywhere.

Whither may I go from thy spirit, or whither may I flee from thy face? (Psalm 138:7)

17. If God is everywhere, why do we not see Him?

Although God is everywhere, we do not see Him because He is a spirit and cannot be seen with our eyes.

God is a spirit; and they that adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

18. Does God see us?

God sees us and watches over us with loving care.

Be not solicitous therefore, saying: "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "Wherewith will we be clothed?" For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. (Matthew 6:31:32)

19. What is God's loving care for us called?

God's loving care for us is called Divine Providence.

Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

20. What do we mean when we say that God is almighty?

When we say that God is almighty we mean that He can do all things.

For nothing shall be impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

21. Is God all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just?

Yes, God is all-wise, all-holy, all-merciful, and all-just.

The Lord is just in all his ways, and holy in all his works. (Psalm 144:17)

22. Can we know by our natural reason that there is a God?

We can know by our natural reason that there is a God, for natural reason tells us that the world we see about us could have been made only by a self-existing Being, all-wise and almighty.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men that detain the truth of God in injustice; because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it unto them. (Romans 1:18-19)

23. Can we know God in any other way than by our natural reason?

Besides knowing God by our natural reason, we can also know Him from supernatural revelation --that is, from the truths, found in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition, which God Himself has revealed to us.

All scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice. (2 Timothy 3:16)

23a. What do we mean when we say that God has revealed these truths to us?

When we say that God has revealed these truths to us we mean that He has made them known to certain persons, to be announced to their fellow men as the word of God.

23b. What is the Bible?

The Bible is the written word of God, committed to His Church for the instruction and sanctification of mankind.

23c. What do we mean when we say that the entire Bible is inspired?

When we say that the entire Bible is inspired we mean that its principal author is God, though it was written by men whom God enlightened and moved to write all those things, and only those things, that He wished to be written.

23d. How is the Bible divided?

The Bible is divided into the Old Testament, written before the coming of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament, written after His ascension into heaven.

23e. Are all the passages of the Bible to be understood according to our modern manner of expression?

No; some of the passages of the Bible are not to be understood according to our modern manner of expression, since they contain certain figures of speech, parables, and literary forms used by the people of ancient times but not employed in the present.

23f. How can we know the true meaning of the Bible?

We can know the true meaning of the Bible from the teaching authority of the Catholic Church, which has received from Jesus Christ the right and the duty to teach and to explain all that God has revealed.

In these epistles there are certain things difficult to understand, which the unlearned and the unstable distort, just as they do the rest of the Scriptures also, to their own destruction. (II Peter 3:16)

23g. Are Catholics encouraged by the Church to read the Bible?

Yes; Catholics are encouraged by the Church to read the Bible, especially the Gospels, which tell about the earthly life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man.

23h. What is the chief message of the New Testament?

The chief message of the New Testament is the joyful announcement of our salvation through Jesus Christ.

These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)

23i. What is Divine Tradition?

Divine Tradition is the unwritten word of God – that is, truths revealed by God, though not written in the Bible, and given to the Church through word of mouth by Jesus Christ or by the apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

23j. Has Divine Tradition ever been committed to writing?

Divine Tradition has been committed to writing, especially by saintly writers called Fathers, who lived in the early centuries but were not inspired, as were those who wrote the Bible.

23k. Has Divine Tradition the same force as the Bible?

Yes; Divine Tradition has the same force as the Bible, since it too contains God's revelation to men.

23l. By what kind of act do we believe the doctrines contained in the Bible and in Divine Tradition?

We believe the doctrines contained in the Bible and Divine Tradition by an act of divine faith, which means that we accept them on the authority of God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

The Unity and Trinity of God

Lesson 3 from the Baltimore Catechism

24. Is there only one God?

Yes, there is only one God.

I am the Lord, and there is none else: there is no God besides me. (Isaiah 45:5)

25. How many Persons are there in God?

In God there are three Divine Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19)

26. Is the Father God?

The Father is God and the first Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians 1:3)

27. Is the Son God?

The Son is God and the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

28. Is the Holy Ghost God?

The Holy Ghost is God and the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (I Corinthians 3:16)

29. What do we mean by the Blessed Trinity?

By the Blessed Trinity we mean, one and the same God in three Divine Persons.

Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19)

30. Are the three Divine Persons really distinct from one another?

The three Divine Persons are really distinct from one another.

And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, as a dove, upon him. And a voice came from heaven: "Thou art my beloved Son. In thee I am well pleased." (Luke 3:22)

31. Are the three Divine Persons perfectly equal to one another?

The three Divine Persons are perfectly equal to one another, because all are one and the same God.

I and the Father are one. (John 10:30)

32. How are the three Divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, one and the same God?

The three Divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God because all have one and the same Divine nature.

33. Can we fully understand how the three Divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God?

We cannot fully understand how the three Divine Persons, though really distinct from one another, are one and the same God because this is a supernatural mystery.

34. What is a supernatural mystery?

A supernatural mystery is a truth which we cannot fully understand, but which we firmly believe because we have God's word for it.

Creation and the Angels

Lesson 4 from the Baltimore Catechism

35. What do we mean when we say that God is the Creator of heaven and earth?

When we say that God is the Creator of heaven and earth we mean that He made all things from nothing by His almighty power.

I am the Lord God, that make all things, that alone stretch out the heavens, that establish the earth. (Isaiah 44:24)

36. Which are the chief creatures of God?

The chief creatures of God are angels and men.

Thou hast made him a little less than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honor; and thou hast set him over the works of thy hands. (Psalm 8:6-7)

37. What are angels?

Angels are created spirits, without bodies, having understanding and free will.

Thousands and thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him. (Daniel 7:10)

38. What gifts did God bestow on the angels when He created them?

When God created the angels He bestowed on them great wisdom, power, and holiness.

O ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord. (Daniel 3:58)

39. Did all the angels remain faithful to God?

Not all the angels remained faithful to God; some of them sinned.

And there was a battle in heaven; Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels. And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any more in heaven. (Apocalypse 12:7)

40. What happened to the angels who remained faithful to God?

The angels who remained faithful to God entered into the eternal happiness of heaven, and these are called good angels.

See that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you, their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father in heaven. (Matthew 18:10)

41. What do the good angels do in heaven?

In heaven the good angels see, love, and adore God.

42. How do the good angels help us?

The good angels help us by praying for us, by acting as messengers from God to us, and by serving as our guardian angels.

For to his angels he has given thee in trust, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. (Psalm 90:11-12)

43. How do our guardian angels help us?

Our guardian angels help us by praying for us, by protecting us from harm, and by inspiring us to do good.

When thou didst pray with thy tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord. (Tobias 12:12)

44. What happened to the angels who did not remain faithful to God?

The angels who did not remain faithful to God were cast into hell, and these are called bad angels, or devils.

Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matthew 25:41)

45. What is the chief way in which the bad angels try to harm us?

The chief way in which the bad angels try to harm us is by tempting us to sin.

Put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. (Ephesians 6:11)

46. Do all temptations come from the bad angels?

Some temptations come from the bad angels; but other temptations come from ourselves and from the persons and things about us.

Do not love the world, or the things that are in the world. (1 John 2:15)

47. Can we always resist temptations?

We can always resist temptations, because no temptation can force us into sin, and because God will always help us if we ask Him. And he has said to me,

"My grace is sufficient for thee." (1 Corinthians 12:9)

The Creation and the Fall of Man

Lesson 5 from the Baltimore Catechism

48. What is man?

Man is a creature composed of body and soul, and made to the image and likeness of God.

And God created man to his own image. (Genesis 2:7)

49. Is this likeness to God in the body or in the soul?

This likeness to God is chiefly in the soul.

50. How is the soul like God?

The soul is like God because it is a spirit having understanding and free will, and is destined to live forever.

And the dust return into its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit return to God, who gave it. (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

51. Who were the first man and woman?

The first man and woman were Adam and Eve, the first parents of the whole human race.

And Adam called the name of his wife Eve. (Genesis 3:15)

52. What was the chief gift bestowed on Adam and Eve by God?

The chief gift bestowed on Adam and Eve by God was sanctifying grace, which made them children of God and gave them the right to heaven.

53. What other gifts were bestowed on Adam and Eve by God?

The other gifts bestowed on Adam and Eve by God were happiness in the Garden of Paradise, great knowledge, control of the passions by reason, and freedom from suffering and death.

He gave them counsel, and a tongue, and eyes, and ears, and a heart to devise; and he filled them with the knowledge of understanding. (Ecclesiasticus 17:5)

54. What commandment did God give Adam and Eve?

God gave Adam and Eve the commandment not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree that grew in the Garden of Paradise.

And he commanded him, saying: "Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death." (Genesis 2:16-17)

55. Did Adam and Eve obey the commandment of God?

Adam and Eve did not obey the commandment of God, but ate of the forbidden fruit.

And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold; and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat. (Genesis 3:6)

56. What happened to Adam and Eve on account of their sin?

On account of their sin Adam and Eve lost sanctifying grace, the right to heaven, and their special gifts; they became subject to death, to suffering, and to a strong inclination to evil, and they were driven from the Garden of Paradise.

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return. (Genesis 3:19)

57. What has happened to us on account of the sin of Adam?

On account of the sin of Adam, we, his descendants, come into the world deprived of sanctifying grace and inherit his punishment, as we would have inherited his gifts had he been obedient to God.

But, by the envy of the devil, death came into the world. (Wisdom 2:24)

58. What is this sin in us called?

This sin in us is called original.

59. Why is this sin called original?

This sin is called original because it comes down to us through our origin, or descent, from Adam.

Therefore as through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed unto all men because all have sinned. (Romans 5:12)

60. What are the chief punishments of Adam which we inherit through original sin?

The chief punishments of Adam which we inherit through original sin are: death, suffering, ignorance, and a strong inclination to sin.

61. Is God unjust in punishing us on account of the sin of Adam?

God is not unjust in punishing us on account of the sin of Adam, because original sin does not take away from us anything to which we have a strict right as human beings, but only the free gifts which God in His goodness would have bestowed on us if Adam had not sinned.

62. Was any human person ever preserved from original sin?

The Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from original sin in view of the merits of her Divine Son, and this privilege is called her Immaculate Conception.

I will put enmities between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait his heel. (Genesis 3:15)

Actual Sin

Lesson 6 from the Baltimore Catechism

63. Is original sin the only kind of sin?

Original sin is not the only kind of sin; there is another kind, called actual sin, which we ourselves commit.

Amen, amen, I say to you that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. (John 8:34)

64. What is actual sin?

Actual sin is any willful thought, desire, word, action, or omission forbidden by the law of God.

65. How many kinds of actual sin are there?

There are two kinds of actual sin: mortal sin and venial sin.

66. What is mortal sin?

Mortal sin is a grievous offense against the law of God.

Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent; for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee. (Ecclesiasticus 21:2)

67. Why is this sin called mortal?

This sin is called mortal, or deadly, because it deprives the sinner of sanctifying grace, the supernatural life of the soul.

Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him. (Ecclesiasticus 15:18)

68. Besides depriving the sinner of sanctifying grace, what else does mortal sin do to the soul?

Besides depriving the sinner of sanctifying grace, mortal sin makes the soul an enemy of God, takes away the merit of all its good actions, deprives it of the right to everlasting happiness in heaven, and makes it deserving of everlasting punishment in hell.

For the wages of sin is death; but the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

69. What three things are necessary to make a sin mortal?

To make a sin mortal these three things are needed:

1. the thought, desire, word, action, or omission must be seriously wrong or considered seriously wrong;
2. the sinner, must be mindful of the serious wrong;
3. the sinner must fully consent to it.

70. What is venial sin?

Venial sin is a less serious offense against the law of God, which does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and which can be pardoned even without sacramental confession.

Be ye therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 6:48)

71. How can a sin be venial?

A sin can be venial in two ways:

1. when the evil done is not seriously wrong;
2. when the evil done is seriously wrong, but the sinner sincerely believes it is only slightly wrong, or does not give full consent to it.

72. How does venial sin harm us?

Venial sin harms us by making us less fervent in the service of God, by weakening our power to resist mortal sin, and by making us deserving of God's punishments in this life or in purgatory.

But I tell you, that of every idle word men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment. (Matthew 12:36)

73. How can we keep from committing sin?

We can keep from committing sin by praying and by receiving the sacraments; by remembering that God is always with us; by recalling that our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost; by keeping occupied with work or play; by promptly resisting the sources of sin within us; by avoiding the near occasions of sin.

And if thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members perish rather than that thy whole body go into hell. (Mark 9:42)

74. What are the chief sources of actual sin?

The chief sources of actual sin are: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth, and these are commonly called capital sins.

75. Why are these called capital sins?

They are called capital sins, not because they, in themselves, are the greatest sins, but because they are the chief reasons why men commit sin.

76. What are the near occasions of sin?

The near occasions of sin are all persons, places, or things that may easily lead us into sin.

The Incarnation

Lesson 7 from the Baltimore Catechism

"I believe ... in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary ..."

77. Did God abandon man after Adam fell into sin?

God did not abandon man after Adam fell into sin, but promised to send into the world a Saviour to free man from his sins and to reopen to him the gates of heaven.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. (John 3:16)

78. Who is the Saviour of all men?

The Saviour of all men is Jesus Christ.

For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, bearing witness in his own time. (I Timothy 2:5-6)

79. What is the chief teaching of the Catholic Church about Jesus Christ?

The chief teaching of the Catholic Church about Jesus Christ is that He is God made man.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

80. Why is Jesus Christ God?

Jesus Christ is God, because He is the only Son of God, having the same Divine nature as His Father.

And the high priest said to him, "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "Thou has said it." (Matthew 26:63)

81. Why is Jesus Christ man?

Jesus Christ is man, because He is the son of the Blessed Virgin Mary and has a body and soul like ours.

82. Is Jesus Christ more than one Person?

No, Jesus Christ is only one Person; and that Person is the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

83. How many natures has Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ has two natures: the nature of God and the nature of man.

84. Was the Son of God always man?

The Son of God was not always man, but became man at the time of the Incarnation.

But when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

85. What is meant by the Incarnation?

By the Incarnation is meant that the Son of God, retaining His Divine nature, took to Himself a human nature, that is, a body and soul like ours.

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

86. How was the Son of God made man?

The Son of God was conceived and made man by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

87. When was the Son of God conceived and made man?

The Son of God was conceived and made man on Annunciation Day, the day on which the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to be the Mother of God.

88. Is Saint Joseph the father of Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ had no human father, but Saint Joseph was the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the guardian, or foster father, of Christ.

89. When was Christ born?

Christ was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Christmas Day, in Bethlehem, more than nineteen hundred years ago.

89a. How many years did Jesus Christ live on earth?

Jesus Christ lived on earth about thirty-three years.

89b. How did Jesus Christ spend His life on earth?

Jesus Christ spent His childhood, youth and early manhood in the home of His mother Mary and His foster father Joseph, working as a carpenter in the village of Nazareth in Palestine; He spent His last years in the work of His public ministry.

89c. What work did Jesus Christ perform in the course of His public ministry?

In the course of His public ministry Jesus Christ gave us an example of great virtue, preached the message of salvation, proved the truth of His message through miracles and prophecies, and established the Church with its sacrifice and sacraments for the salvation of men until the end of time.

The Redemption

Lesson 8 from the Baltimore Catechism

"I believe ... in Jesus Christ ... who ... suffered under Pontius Pilot, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead ..."

90. What is meant by the Redemption?

By the Redemption is meant that Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer of the whole human race, offered His sufferings and death to God as a fitting sacrifice in satisfaction for the sins of men, and regained for them the right to be children of God and heirs of heaven.

He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have our redemption, the remission of our sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

91. What were the chief sufferings of Christ?

The chief sufferings of Christ were His bitter agony of soul, His bloody sweat, His cruel scourging, His crowning with thorns, His crucifixion, and His death on the cross.

And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." And saying this he gave up the ghost. (Luke 23:46)

92. When did Christ die?

Christ died on Good Friday.

93. Where did Christ die?

Christ died on Golgotha, a place outside the city of Jerusalem.

And they came to a place called Golgotha, that is, the Place of the Skull. (Matthew 27:33)

94. What do we learn from the sufferings and death of Christ?

From the sufferings and death of Christ we learn God's love for man and the evil of sin, for which God, who is all-just, demands such great satisfaction.

95. What do we mean when we say in the Apostles' Creed that Christ descended into hell?

When we say that Christ descended into hell we mean that, after He died, the soul of Christ descended into a place or state of rest, called limbo, where the souls of the just were waiting for Him.

Put to death indeed in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit, in which also he went and preached to those spirits that were in prison. (1 Peter 3:18-19)

96. Why did Christ go to limbo?

Christ went to limbo to announce to the souls waiting there the joyful news that He had reopened heaven to mankind.

97. Where was Christ's body while His soul was In limbo?

While His soul was in limbo, Christ's body was in the holy sepulchre.

And, taking him down, he wrapped him in fine linen and laid him in a sepulchre that was hewed in stone, wherein never yet any man had been laid. (Luke 23:53)

98. When did Christ rise from the dead?

Christ rose from the dead, glorious and immortal, on Easter Sunday, the third day after His death.

And on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled back from the sepulchre. (Luke 24:1-2)

99. Why did Christ rise from the dead?

Christ rose from the dead to show that He is true God and to teach us that we, too, shall rise from the dead.

For if the dead do not rise, neither has Christ risen; and if Christ has not risen, vain is your faith, for you are still in your sins. (I Corinthians 15:16-17)

100. Will all men rise from the dead?

All men will rise from the dead, but only those who have been faithful to Christ will share in His glory.

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall all indeed rise. (I Corinthians 15:51)

101. When did Christ ascend into heaven?

Christ ascended, body and soul, into heaven on Ascension Day, forty days after His Resurrection.

And it came to pass as he blessed them, that he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. (Luke 24:51)

102. Why did Christ remain on earth forty days after His Resurrection?

Christ remained on earth forty days after His Resurrection to prove that He had truly risen from the dead and to complete the instruction of the apostles.

To them also he showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs during the forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3)

103. What do we mean when we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty?

When we say that Christ sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, we mean that Our Lord as God is equal to the Father, and that as man He shares above all the saints in the glory of His Father and exercises for all eternity the supreme authority of a king over all creatures.

All powers in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28:18)

104. What do we mean when we say that Christ will come from thence to judge the living and the dead?

When we say that Christ will come from thence to judge the living and the dead, we mean that on the last day Our Lord will come to pronounce a sentence of eternal reward or of eternal punishment on everyone who has ever lived in this world.

For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will render to everyone according to his conduct. (Matthew 16:27)

The Holy Ghost and Grace

Lesson 9 from the Baltimore Catechism

105. Who is the Holy Ghost?

The Holy Ghost is God and the third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

106. From whom does the Holy Ghost proceed?

The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son.

But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me. (John 15:26)

107. Is the Holy Ghost equal to the Father and the Son?

The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son, because He is God.

108. What does the Holy Ghost do for the salvation of mankind?

The Holy Ghost dwells in the Church as the source of its life and sanctifies souls through the gift of grace.

Guard the good trust through the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us. (II Timothy 1:14)

109. What is grace?

Grace is a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation.

And of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (John 1:16-17)

110. How many kinds of grace are there?

There are two kinds of grace: sanctifying grace and actual grace.

111. What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace is that grace which confers on our souls a new life, that is, a sharing in the life of God Himself.

But to as many as received him he gave the power of becoming sons of God. (John 1:12)

112. What are the chief effects of sanctifying grace?

The chief effects of sanctifying grace are:

1. it makes us holy and pleasing to God;
2. it makes us adopted children of God;
3. it makes us temples of the Holy Ghost;
4. it gives us the right to heaven.

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him. (John 14:23)

113. What is actual grace?

Actual grace is a supernatural help of God which enlightens our mind and strengthens our will to do good and to avoid evil.

For it is God who of his good pleasure works in you both the will and the performance. (Philippians 2:13)

114. Can we resist the grace of God?

We can resist the grace of God, for our will is free, and God does not force us to accept His grace.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How often I would have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but thou wouldst not! (Matthew 23:37)

115. Why is sanctifying grace necessary for salvation?

Sanctifying grace is necessary for salvation because it is the supernatural life, which alone enables us to attain the supernatural happiness of heaven.

116. Is actual grace necessary for all who have attained the use of reason?

Actual grace is necessary for all who have attained the use of reason, because without it we cannot long resist the power of temptation or perform other actions which merit a reward in heaven.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as from ourselves but our sufficiency is from God. (II Corinthians 3:5)

117. What are the principal ways of obtaining grace?

The principal ways of obtaining grace are prayer and the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

For we were buried with him by means of Baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we may also walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

118. How can we make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward?

We can make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward by doing them for the love of God and by keeping ourselves in the state of grace.

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or do anything else, do all for the glory of God. (I Corinthians 10:31)

The Virtues and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost

Lesson 10 from the Baltimore Catechism

119. What are the chief supernatural powers that are bestowed on our souls with sanctifying grace?

The chief supernatural powers that are bestowed on our souls with sanctifying grace are the three theological virtues and the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

120. Why are these virtues called theological virtues?

These virtues are called theological virtues because they have God for their proper object.

121. What are the three theological virtues?

The three theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity.

So there abide faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

122. What is faith?

Faith is the virtue by which we firmly believe all the truths God has revealed, on the word of God revealing them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. (John 20:29)

123. What is hope?

Hope is the virtue by which we firmly trust that God, who is all-powerful and faithful to His promises, will in His mercy give us eternal happiness and the means to obtain it.

But hope that is seen is not hope. For how can a man hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Romans 8:24-25)

124. What is charity?

Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

If I should speak with the tongues of men and angels, but do not have charity, I have become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And if I have prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, yet do not have charity, I am nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:1-2)

125. Which are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost?

The seven gifts of the Holy Ghost are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:2-3)

126. How do the gifts of the Holy Ghost help us?

The gifts of the Holy Ghost help us by making us more alert to discern and more ready to do the will of God.

127. Which are some of the effects in us of the gifts of the Holy Ghost?

Some of the effects in us of the gifts of the Holy Ghost are the fruits of the Holy Ghost and the beatitudes.

128. Which are the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost?

The twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost are: charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, and chastity.

But the fruit of the Spirit is: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, modesty, continency. (Galatians 5:22-23)

129. Which are the eight beatitudes?

The eight beatitudes are:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth.
3. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
4. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of
8. Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(See Matthew 5:3-10.)

130. Are there any other virtues besides the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity?

Besides the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity there are other virtues, called moral virtues.

131. Why are these virtues called moral virtues?

These virtues are called moral virtues because they dispose us to lead moral, or good lives, by aiding us to treat persons and things in the right way, that is, according to the will of God.

132. Which are the chief moral virtues?

The chief moral virtues are: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance; these are called cardinal virtues.

And if a man love justice, her labors have great virtues. For she teacheth temperance and prudence and justice and fortitude, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in life. (Wisdom 8:7)

133. Why are these virtues called cardinal virtues?

These virtues are called cardinal virtues because they are like hinges on which hang all the other moral virtues and our whole moral life. The word "cardinal" is derived from the Latin word "cardo" meaning hinge.

134. How do prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance dispose us to lead good lives?

Prudence disposes us in all circumstances to form right judgments about what we must do or not do. Justice disposes us to give everyone what belongs to him. Fortitude disposes us to do what is good in spite of any difficulty. Temperance disposes us to control our desires and to use rightly the things which please ourselves.

He that followeth justice and mercy shall find life, justice, and glory. (Proverbs 21:21)

135. Which are some of the other moral virtues?

Some of the other moral virtues are:

- Filial piety and patriotism, which dispose us to honor, love, and respect our parents and our country.
- Obedience, which disposes us to do the will of our superiors.
- Veracity, which disposes us to tell the truth.
- Liberality, which disposes us rightly to use worldly goods.
- Patience, which disposes us to bear up under trials and difficulties.
- Humility, which disposes us to acknowledge our limitations.
- Chastity, or purity, which disposes us to be pure in soul and body.

Besides these, there are many other moral virtues.

The Catholic Church

Lesson 11 from the Baltimore Catechism

"I believe in ... the Holy Catholic Church ..."

136. What is the Church?

The Church is the congregation of all baptized persons united in the same true faith, the same sacrifice, and the same sacraments, under the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff and the bishops in communion with him.

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. (Matthew 13:24)

137. Who founded the Church?

Jesus Christ founded the Church.

And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

138. Why did Jesus Christ found the Church?

Jesus Christ founded the Church to bring all men to eternal salvation.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me. And I give them everlasting life; and they shall never perish, neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand. (John 10:27-28)

139. How is the Church enabled to lead men to salvation?

The Church is enabled to lead men to salvation by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, who gives it life.

140. When was the dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church first visibly manifested?

The dwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church was first visibly manifested on Pentecost Sunday, when He came down upon the apostles in the form of tongues of fire.

And when the days of Pentecost were drawing to a close, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a violent wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, which settled upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Ghost prompted them to speak. (Acts 2:1-4)

141. How long will the Holy Ghost dwell in the Church?

The Holy Ghost will dwell in the Church until the end of time.

And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. (John 14:16)

142. Who sent the Holy Ghost to dwell in the Church?

God the Father and God the Son sent the Holy Ghost to dwell in the Church.

143. What does the indwelling of the Holy Ghost enable the Church to do?

The indwelling of the Holy Ghost enables the Church to teach, to sanctify, and to rule the faithful in the name of Christ.

But when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he will hear he will speak, and the things that are to come he will declare to you. (John 16:13)

144. What is meant by teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in the name of Christ?

By teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in the name of Christ is meant that the Church always does the will of its Divine Founder, who remains forever its invisible Head.

145. To whom did Christ give the power to teach, to sanctify, and to rule the members of His Church?

Christ gave the power to teach, to sanctify, and to rule the members of His Church to the apostles, the first bishops of the Church.

He who hears you, hears me; and he who rejects you rejects me; and he who rejects me, rejects him who sent me. (Luke 10:16)

146. Did Christ intend that this power should be exercised by the apostles alone?

No, Christ intended that this power should be exercised also by their successors, the bishops of the Church.

And they prayed and said, "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all, show which of these two thou has chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away to go to his own place." (Acts 1:24-25)

147. Did Christ give special power in His Church to any one of the apostles?

Christ gave special power in His Church to Saint Peter by making him the head of the apostles and the chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church.

But Peter, standing up with the Eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke out to them. (Acts 2:14)

148. Did Christ intend that the special power of chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church should be exercised by Saint Peter alone?

Christ did not intend that the special power of chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church should be exercised by Saint Peter alone, but intended that this power should be passed down to his successor, the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, who is the Vicar of Christ on earth and the visible head of the Church.

149. Who assist the bishops in the care of souls?

The priests, especially parish priests, assist the bishops in the care of souls.

And when they had appointed presbyters for them in each church, with prayer and fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:22)

150. Who are the laity of the Church?

The laity of the Church are all its members who do not belong to the clerical or to the religious state.

151. How can the laity help the Church in her care of souls?

The laity can help the Church in her care of souls by leading lives that will reflect credit on the Church, and by cooperating with their bishops and priests, especially through Catholic Action.

Behave yourselves honorably among the pagans; that, whereas they slander you as evildoers, they may, through observing you, by reason of your good works glory God in the day of the visitation. (1 Peter 2:12)

151a. What is Catholic Action?

Catholic Action is the active participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Church under the guidance of the hierarchy.

151b. In what ways can the laity participate actively in the apostolate of the Church?

The laity can participate actively in the apostolate of the Church when they arouse the interest of non-Catholics in the Catholic faith; promote high standards in the press, motion pictures, radio and television; take part in the activities of Catholic societies and organizations; represent, under proper direction, the Church's position in speaking and writing; and go as lay missionaries to foreign lands.

The Marks and Attributes of the Church

Lesson 12 from the Baltimore Catechism

152. Which is the one true Church established by Christ?

The one true Church established by Christ is the Catholic Church.

And other sheep I have that are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd. (John 10:16)

153. How do we know that the Catholic Church is the one true Church established by Christ?

We know that the Catholic Church is the one true Church established by Christ because it alone has the marks of the true Church.

Holy Father, keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we also are. (John 17:11)

154. What do we mean by the marks of the Church?

By the marks of the Church we mean certain clear signs by which all men can recognize it as the true Church founded by Jesus Christ.

155. What are the chief marks of the Church?

The chief marks of the Church are four: It is one, holy, catholic or universal, and apostolic.

156. Why is the Catholic Church one?

The Catholic Church is one because all its members, according to the will of Christ, profess the same faith, have the same sacrifice and sacraments, and are united under one and the same visible head, the Pope.

Because the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread. (I Corinthians 10:17)

157. Why is the Catholic Church holy?

The Catholic Church is holy because it was founded by Jesus Christ, who is all-holy, and because it teaches, according to the will of Christ, holy doctrines, and provides the means of leading a holy life, thereby giving holy members to every age.

A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them. (Matthew 7:17-20)

158. Why is the Catholic Church catholic or universal?

The Catholic Church is catholic or universal because, destined to last for all time, it never fails to fulfill the divine commandment to teach all nations all the truths revealed by God.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a witness to all nations. (Matthew 24:14)

159. Why is the Catholic Church apostolic?

The Catholic Church is apostolic because it was founded by Christ on the apostles and, according to His divine will, has always been governed by their lawful successors.

And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

160. How do we know that no other church but the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ?

We know that no other church but the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ because no other church has these four marks.

161. What are the chief attributes of the Catholic Church?

The chief attributes of the Catholic Church are authority, infallibility, and indefectibility. They are called attributes because they are qualities perfecting the nature of the Church.

162. What is meant by the authority of the Catholic Church?

By the authority of the Catholic Church is meant that the Pope and the bishops, as the lawful successors of the apostles, have power from Christ Himself to teach, to sanctify, and to govern the faithful in spiritual matters.

On behalf of Christ, therefore, we are acting as ambassadors, God, as it were, appealing through us. (II Corinthians 5:20)

163. What is meant by the infallibility of the Catholic Church?

By the infallibility of the Catholic Church is meant that the Church, by the special assistance of the Holy Ghost, cannot err when it teaches or believes a doctrine of faith or morals.

But the Advocate, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you. (John 14:26)

164. When does the Church teach infallibly?

The Church teaches infallibly when it defines, through the Pope alone, as the teacher of all Christians, or through the Pope and the bishops, a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by all the faithful.

165. What is meant by the indefectibility of the Catholic Church?

By the indefectibility of the Catholic Church is meant that the Church, as Christ founded it, will last until the end of time.

And, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. (Matthew 28:20)

166. Are all obliged to belong to the Catholic Church in order to be saved?

All are obliged to belong to the Catholic Church in order to be saved.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me." (John 14:6)

167. What do we mean when we say, "Outside the Church there is no salvation?"

When we say, "Outside the Church there is no salvation," we mean that Christ made the Catholic Church a necessary means of salvation and commanded all to enter it, so that a person must be connected with the Church in some way to be saved.

168. How can persons who are not members of the Catholic Church be saved?

Persons who are not members of the Catholic Church can be saved if, through no fault of their own, they do not know that the Catholic Church is the true Church, but they love God and try to do His will, for in this way they are connected with the Church by desire.

169. Why is the Catholic Church called the Mystical Body of Christ?

The Catholic Church is called the Mystical Body of Christ because its members are united by supernatural bonds with one another and with Christ, their Head, thus resembling the members and head of the living human body.

Again, he is the head of his body, the Church. (Colossians 1:18)

169a. What conditions are necessary in order that a person be a member of the Mystical Body in the full sense?

In order that a person be a member of the Mystical Body in the full sense, it is necessary that he be baptized, that he profess the Catholic faith, and that he neither separate himself from the Mystical Body nor be excluded by lawful authority.

And if he refuses to hear them, appeal to the Church, but if he refuses to hear even the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican. (Matthew 18:17)

169b. How does a baptized person separate himself from full incorporation in the Mystical Body?

A baptized person separates himself from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by open and deliberate heresy, apostasy or schism.

169c. How does a baptized person separate himself from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by heresy?

A baptized person separates himself from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by heresy when he openly rejects or doubts some doctrine proposed by the Catholic Church as a truth of divine-Catholic faith, though still professing himself a Christian.

169d. When does a baptized person separate himself from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by apostasy?

A baptized person separates himself from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by apostasy when he openly rejects the entire Christian faith.

169e. When does a baptized person separate himself from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by schism?

A baptized person separates himself from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by schism when he openly refuses obedience to the lawful authorities of the Church, particularly to the Pope.

169f. When is a baptized person separated from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by lawful authority?

A baptized person is separated from full incorporation in the Mystical Body by lawful authority when he incurs one of the more severe forms of excommunication.

The Communion of Saints and the Forgiveness of Sins

Lesson 13 from the Baltimore Catechism

"I believe in ... the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins ..."

170. What is meant by "the communion of saints" in the Apostles' Creed?

By "the communion of saints" is meant the union of the faithful on earth, the blessed in heaven, and the souls in purgatory, with Christ as their Head.

171. Through the communion of saints, what can the blessed in heaven do for the souls in purgatory and the faithful on earth?

Through the communion of saints, the blessed in heaven can help the souls in purgatory and the faithful on earth by praying for them.

It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins. (II Maccabees 12:46)

172. Should the faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, honor the blessed in heaven and pray to them?

The faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, should honor the blessed in heaven and pray to them, because they are worthy of honor and as friends of God will help the faithful on earth.

Let us now praise men of renown, and our fathers in their generation. (Ecclesiasticus 44:1)

173. Can the faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, relieve the sufferings of the souls in purgatory?

The faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, can relieve the sufferings the souls in purgatory by prayer, fasting, and other good works, by indulgences, and by having Masses offered for them.

It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins. (II Maccabees 12:46)

174. Can the faithful on earth help one another?

The faithful on earth, as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, can help one another by practicing supernatural charity and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

Pray for one another that you may be saved. For the unceasing prayer of a just man is of great avail. (James 5:16)

175. What is meant in the Apostles' Creed by "the forgiveness of sins"?

By "the forgiveness of sins" in the Apostles' Creed is meant that God has given to the Church, through Jesus Christ, the power to forgive sins, no matter how great or how many they are, if sinners truly repent.

Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)

The Resurrection and Life Everlasting

Lesson 14 from the Baltimore Catechism

"I believe in ... the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

176. What is meant by "the resurrection of the body"?

By "the resurrection of the body" is meant that at the end of the world the bodies of all men will rise from the earth and be united again to their souls, nevermore to be separated.

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again. (I Corinthians 15:51)

177. Why will the bodies of the just rise?

The bodies of the just will rise to share forever in the glory of their souls.

178. Has the body of any human person ever been raised from the dead and taken into heaven?

By the special privilege of her Assumption, the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary, united to her immaculate soul, was glorified and taken into heaven.

179. Why will the bodies of the damned also rise?

The bodies of the damned will also rise to share in the eternal punishment of their souls.

180. What is the judgment called which will be passed on all men immediately after the general resurrection?

The judgment which will be passed on all men immediately after the general resurrection is called the general judgment.

And he charged us to preach to the people and to testify that he it is who has been appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. (Acts 10:42)

181. What is the judgment called which will be passed on each one of us immediately after death?

The judgment which will be passed on each one of us immediately after death is called the particular judgment.

For it is easy before God in the day of death to reward everyone according to his ways. (Ecclesiasticus 11:28)

182. If everyone is judged immediately after death, why will there be a general judgment?

Although everyone is judged immediately after death, it is fitting that there be a general judgment in order that the justice, wisdom, and mercy of God may be glorified in the presence of all.

Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them and taken away their labors. These seeing it, shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation. (Wisdom 5:1-2)

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183. What are the rewards or punishments appointed for men after the particular judgment?

The rewards or punishments appointed for men after the particular judgment are heaven, purgatory, or hell.

184. Who are punished in purgatory?

Those are punished for a time in purgatory who die in the state of grace but are guilty of venial sin, or have not fully satisfied for the temporal punishment due to their sins.

The fire will assay the quality of everyone's work; if his work abides which he has built thereon, he will receive reward; if his work burns he will lose his reward, but himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (I Corinthians 3:13-15)

185. Who are punished in hell?

Those are punished in hell who die in mortal sin; they are deprived of the vision of God and suffer dreadful torments, especially that of fire, for all eternity.

Then he will say to those on his left hand, "Depart from me, accursed ones, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41)

186. Who are rewarded in heaven?

Those are rewarded in heaven who have died in the state of grace and have been purified in purgatory, if necessary, from all venial sin and all debt of temporal punishment; they see God face to face and share forever in His glory and happiness.

Then the king will say to those on his right hand, "Come, blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25:34)

187. What is meant by the word "Amen," with which we end the Apostles' Creed?

By the word "Amen," with which we end the Apostles' Creed, is meant "So it is," or "So be it"; the word expresses our firm belief in all the doctrines that the Creed contains.

Amen, I say to you, I have not found such great faith in Israel. (Matthew 8:10)

Part Two: The Commandments

The Two Great Commandments

Lesson 15 from the Baltimore Catechism

188. Besides believing what God has revealed, what else must we do to be saved?

Besides believing what God has revealed, we must keep His law.

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

189. Which are the two great commandments that contain the whole law of God?

The two great commandments that contain the whole law of God are:

1. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength;
2. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

And one of them, a doctor of the Law, putting him to the test, asked him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Jesus said to him, "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.' This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:35-40)

190. What must we do to love God, our neighbor, and ourselves?

To love God, our neighbor, and ourselves we must keep the commandments of God and of the Church, and perform the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

My dear children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:18)

191. Which are the chief corporal works of mercy?

The chief corporal works of mercy are seven:

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked.
4. To visit the imprisoned.
5. To shelter the homeless.
6. To visit the sick.
7. To bury the dead.

192. Which are the chief spiritual works of mercy?

The chief spiritual works of mercy are seven:

1. To admonish the sinner.
2. To instruct the ignorant.
3. To counsel the doubtful.
4. To comfort the sorrowful.
5. To bear wrongs patiently.
6. To forgive all injuries.
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

193. Is everyone obliged to perform the works of mercy?

Everyone is obliged to perform the works of mercy, according to his own ability and the need of his neighbor.

For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you covered me; sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. (Matthew 25:35-36)

194. Are all the ordinary deeds done every day to relieve the corporal or spiritual needs of others true works of mercy?

All the ordinary deeds done every day to relieve the corporal or spiritual needs of others are true works of mercy, if done in the name of Christ.

For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you are Christ's, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward. (Mark 9:40)

195. Which are the commandments of God?

The commandments of God are these ten:

1. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember thou keep holy the Lord's day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

196. Should we be satisfied merely to keep the commandments God?

We should not be satisfied merely to keep the commandments of God, but should always be ready to do good deeds, even when they are not commanded.

If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. (Matthew 19:21)

197. What does Our Savior especially recommend that is not strictly commanded by the law of God?

Our Savior especially recommends the observance of the Evangelical Counsels – voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and perfect obedience.

You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

The First Commandment of God

Lesson 16 from the Baltimore Catechism

198. What is the first commandment of God?

The first commandment of God is: I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.

Thou shalt not have strange Gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. (Exodus 20:3-4)

199. What are we commanded by the first commandment?

By the first commandment we are commanded to offer to God alone the supreme worship that is due Him.

It is written, "The Lord thy God shalt thou worship, and him only shalt thou serve." (Luke 4:8)

200. How do we worship God?

We worship God by acts of faith, hope, and charity, and by adoring Him and praying to Him.

201. What does faith oblige us to do?

Faith obliges us: first, to make efforts to find out what God has revealed; second, to believe firmly what God has revealed; third, to profess our faith openly whenever necessary.

Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. (Matthew 10:32)

202. What does hope oblige us to do?

Hope obliges us to trust firmly that God will give us eternal life and the means to obtain it.

Paul, a servant of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, in accordance with the faith of God's elect and the full knowledge of the truth which is according to piety, in the hope of life everlasting which God, who does not lie, promised before the ages began. (Titus 1:1-2)

203. What does charity oblige us to do?

Charity obliges us to love God above all things because He is infinitely good, and to love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

And one of them, a doctor of the Law, putting him to the test, asked him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Jesus said to him, "'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.' This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:35-40)

204. How can a Catholic best safeguard his faith?

A Catholic can best safeguard his faith by making frequent acts of faith, by praying for a strong faith, by studying his religion very earnestly, by living a good life, by good reading, by refusing to associate with the enemies of the Church, and by not reading books and papers opposed to the Church and her teaching.

I know that after my departure fierce wolves will get in among you, and will not spare the flock. And from among your own selves men will rise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:29-30)

205. How does a Catholic sin against faith?

A Catholic sins against faith by apostasy, heresy, indifferentism, and by taking part in non-Catholic worship.

206. Why does a Catholic sin against faith by taking part in non-Catholic worship.

A Catholic sins against faith by taking part in non-Catholic worship when he intends to identify himself with a religion he knows is defective.

This is why I was born, and why I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice. (John 18:37)

207. What are the sins against hope?

The sins against hope are presumption and despair.

208. When does a person sin by presumption?

A person sins by presumption when he trusts that he can be saved by his own efforts without God's help, or by God's help without his own efforts.

Nay I do not even judge my own self. For I have nothing on my conscience, yet I am not thereby justified. (I Corinthians 4:4)

209. When does a person sin by despair?

A person sins by despair when he deliberately refuses to trust that God will give him the necessary help to save his soul.

May no temptation take hold of you but such as man is equal to. God is faithful and will not permit you to be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also give you a way out that you may be able to bear it. (I Corinthians 10:13)

210. What are the chief sins against charity?

The chief sins against charity are hatred of God and of our neighbor, envy, sloth, and scandal.

Charity does not envy. (I Corinthians 13:4)

211. Besides the sins against faith, hope, and charity, what other sins does the first commandment forbid?

Besides the sins against faith, hope, and charity, the first commandment forbids also superstition and sacrilege.

212. When does a person sin by superstition?

A person sins by superstition when he attributes to a creature a power that belongs to God alone, as when he makes use of charms or spells, believes in dreams or fortune-telling, or goes to spiritists.

Neither let there be found among you any one that ... consulteth soothsayers, or observeth dreams and omens. Neither let there be any wizard, nor charmer. (Deuteronomy 19:10-11)

213. When does a person sin by sacrilege?

A person sins by sacrilege when he mistreats sacred persons, places, or things.

They have set thy sanctuary ablaze, they have profaned the dwelling of thy name on the earth. (Psalm 73:7)

Honoring the Saints, Relics, and Images

Lesson 17 from the Baltimore Catechism

214. Does the first commandment forbid us to honor the saints in heaven?

The first commandment does not forbid us to honor the saints in heaven, provided we do not give them the honor that belongs to God alone.

For, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. (Luke 1:48)

215. Why do we honor the saints in heaven?

We honor the saints in heaven because they practiced great virtue when they were on earth, and because in honoring those who are the chosen friends of God we honor God Himself.

216. How can we honor the saints?

We can honor the saints: first, by imitating their holy lives; second, by praying to them; third, by showing respect to their relics and images.

Brethren, be imitators of me, and mark those who walk after the pattern you have in us. (Philippians 3:17)

217. When we pray to the saints what do we ask them to do?

When we pray to the saints we ask them to offer their prayers to God for us.

218. How do we know that the saints will pray for us?

We know that the saints will pray for us because they are with God and have great love for us.

219. Why do we honor relics?

We honor relics because they are the bodies of the saints or objects connected with the saints or with Our Lord.

220. When does the first commandment forbid the making or the use of statues and pictures?

The first commandment forbids the making or the use of statues and pictures only when they promote false worship.

Thou shalt not have strange Gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. (Exodus 20:3-4)

221. Is it right to show respect to the statues and pictures of Christ and of the saints?

It is right to show respect to the statues and pictures of Christ and of the saints, just as it is right to show respect to the images of those whom we honor or love on earth.

222. Do we honor Christ and the saints when we pray before the crucifix, relics, and sacred images?

We honor Christ and the saints when we pray before the crucifix, relics, and sacred images because we honor the persons they represent; we adore Christ and venerate the saints.

223. Do we pray to the crucifix or to the images and relics of the saints?

We do not pray to the crucifix or to the images and relics of the saints, but to the persons they represent.

The Second and Third Commandments of God

Lesson 18 from the Baltimore Catechism

224. What is the second commandment of God?

The second commandment of God is: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord in vain. (Exodus 20:7)

225. What are we commanded by the second commandment?

By the second commandment we are commanded always to speak with reverence of God, of the saints, and of holy things, and to be truthful in taking oaths and faithful to them and to our vows.

Blessed be the name of the Lord both now and forever. From the rising of the sun unto its going down, may the name of the Lord be praised. (Psalm 112:2-3)

226. What is an oath?

An oath is the calling on God to witness the truth of what we say.

For men swear by one greater than themselves, and an oath given as a guarantee is the final settlement of all their disagreement. (Hebrews 6:16)

227. What things are necessary to make an oath lawful?

To make an oath lawful, three things are necessary: first, we must have a good reason for taking an oath; second, we must be convinced that what we say under oath is true; third, we must not swear, that is, take an oath, to do what is wrong.

And thou shalt swear: As the Lord liveth, in truth, and in judgment and in justice. (Jeremiah 4:2)

228. What great sin does a person commit who deliberately calls on God to bear witness to a lie?

A person who deliberately calls on God to bear witness to a lie commits the very grievous sin of perjury.

Thou shalt not swear falsely by my name, nor profane the name of thy God. (Leviticus 19:12)

229. What is a vow?

A vow is a deliberate promise made to God by which a person binds himself under pain of sin to do something that is especially pleasing to God.

When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to pay it; because the Lord thy God will require it. (Deuteronomy 23:21)

230. What is meant by taking God's name in vain?

By taking God's name in vain is meant that the name of God or the holy name of Jesus Christ is used without reverence; for example, to express surprise or anger.

Blessed be the name of the Lord both now and forever. From the rising of the sun unto its going down, may the name of the Lord be praised. (Psalm 112:2-3)

231. Is it a sin to take God's name in vain?

It is a sin to take God's name in vain; ordinarily, it is a venial sin.

232. What is cursing?

Cursing is the calling down of some evil on a person, place, or thing.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (Romans 12:14)

233. What is blasphemy?

Blasphemy is insulting language which expresses contempt for God, either directly or through His saints and holy things.

Amen I say to you, that all sins shall be forgiven to the sons of men, and the blasphemies wherewith they may blaspheme; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Ghost never has forgiveness, but will be guilty of an everlasting sin. (Mark 3:28-30)

234. What is the third commandment of God?

The third commandment of God is: Remember thou keep holy the Lord's day.

And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. (Genesis 2:2)

235. Why does the Church command us to keep Sunday as the Lord's day?

The Church commands us to keep Sunday as the Lord's day, because on Sunday Christ rose from the dead, and on Sunday the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles.

236. What are we commanded by the third commandment?

By the third commandment we are commanded to worship God in a special manner on Sunday, the Lord's day.

Keep your sabbath; for it is holy unto you. (Exodus 31:14)

237. How does the Church command us to worship God on Sunday?

The Church commands us to worship God on Sunday by assisting at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

238. What is forbidden by the third commandment of God?

By the third commandment of God all unnecessary servile work on Sunday is forbidden.

Six days shall you do work; in the seventh day is the sabbath, the rest holy to the Lord. (Exodus 31:15)

239. What is servile work?

Servile work is that which requires labor of body rather than of mind.

240. When is servile work allowed on Sunday?

Servile work is allowed on Sunday when the honor of God, our own need, or that of our neighbor requires it.

The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Commandments of God

Lesson 19 from the Baltimore Catechism

241. What is the fourth commandment of God?

The fourth commandment of God is: Honor thy father and thy mother.

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee. (Exodus 20:12)

242. What are we commanded by the fourth commandment?

By the fourth commandment we are commanded to respect and love our parents, to obey them in all that is not sinful, and to help them when they are in need.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for that is right. (Ephesians 6:1)

243. Does the fourth commandment oblige us to respect and to obey others besides our parents?

Besides our parents, the fourth commandment obliges us to respect and obey all our lawful superiors.

Let everyone be subject to the higher authorities, for there exists no authority except from God, and those who exist have been appointed by God. Therefore he who resists authority resists the ordinance of God; and they that resist bring on themselves condemnation. (Romans 13:1-2)

244. What duty have parents toward their children and superiors toward those under their care?

Parents must provide for the spiritual and bodily welfare of their children; superiors, according to their varying degrees of responsibility, must care for those entrusted to them.

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but rear them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

245. What are the duties of a citizen toward his country?

A citizen must love his country, be sincerely interested in its welfare, and respect and obey its lawful authority.

246. How does a citizen show a sincere interest in his country's welfare?

A citizen shows a sincere interest in his country's welfare by voting honestly and without selfish motives, by paying just taxes, and by defending his country's rights when necessary.

247. Why must we respect and obey the lawful authority of our country?

We must respect and obey the lawful authority of our country because it comes from God, the Source of all authority.

248. Why are we obliged to take an active part in works of good citizenship?

We are obliged to take an active part in works of good citizenship because right reason requires citizens to work together for the public welfare of the country.

249. What are the chief duties of those who hold public office?

The chief duties of those who hold public office are to be just to all in exercising their authority and to promote the general welfare.

Give ear, you that rule the people, and that please yourselves in multitudes of nations; for power is given you by the Lord, and strength by the most High, who will examine your works, and search out your thoughts. (Wisdom 6:3-4)

250. What does the fourth commandment forbid?

The fourth commandment forbids disrespect, unkindness, and disobedience to our parents and lawful superiors.

Cursed be he that honoreth not his father and mother. (Deuteronomy 27:16)

251. What is the fifth commandment of God?

The fifth commandment of God is: Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not kill. (Exodus 20:13)

252. What are we commanded by the fifth commandment?

By the fifth commandment we are commanded to take proper care of our own spiritual and bodily well-being and that of our neighbor.

253. What does the fifth commandment forbid?

The fifth commandment forbids murder and suicide, and also fighting, anger, hatred, revenge, drunkenness, reckless driving, and bad example.

Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. (1 John 3:15)

254. What is the sixth commandment of God?

The sixth commandment of God is: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)

255. What are we commanded by the sixth commandment?

By the sixth commandment we are commanded to be pure and modest in our behavior.

I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God. (Romans 12:1)

256. What does the sixth commandment forbid?

The sixth commandment forbids all impurity and immodesty in words, looks, and actions, whether alone or with others.

But immorality and every uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becomes saints. (Ephesians 5:3)

257. What are the chief dangers to the virtue of chastity?

The chief dangers to the virtue of chastity are: idleness, sinful curiosity, bad companions, drinking, immodest dress, and indecent books, plays, and motion pictures.

258. What are the chief means of preserving the virtue of chastity?

The chief means of preserving the virtue of chastity are to avoid carefully all unnecessary dangers, to seek God's help through prayer, frequent confession, Holy Communion, and assistance at Holy Mass, and to have a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Be sober, be watchful! For your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

The Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments of God

Lesson 20 from the Baltimore Catechism

259. What is the seventh commandment of God?

The seventh commandment of God is: Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not steal. (Exodus 20:15)

260. What are we commanded by the seventh commandment?

By the seventh commandment we are commanded to respect what belongs to others, to live up to our business agreements, and to pay our just debts.

Better is a little with justice, than great revenue with iniquity. (Proverbs 16:8)

261. What does the seventh commandment forbid?

Besides stealing, the seventh commandment forbids cheating, unjust keeping of what belongs to others, unjust damage to the property of others, and the accepting of bribes by public officials.

Do not any unjust thing in judgment, in rule, in weight, or in measure. Let the balance be just and the weights equal, the bushel just, and the sextary equal. (Leviticus 19:35-36)

262. Are we obliged to restore to the owner stolen goods, or their value?

We are obliged to restore to the owner stolen goods, or their value, whenever we are able.

If any man steal an ox or a sheep, and kill or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for one ox, and four sheep for one sheep. (Exodus 22:1)

263. Are we obliged to repair damage unjustly done to the property of others?

We are obliged to repair damage unjustly done to the property of others, or to pay the amount of the damage, as far as we are able.

If any man hurt a field or a vineyard, and put in his beast to feed upon that which is other men's, he shall restore the best of whatsoever he hath in his own field, or in his vineyard, according to the estimation of the damage. (Exodus 22:5)

264. What is the eighth commandment of God?

The eighth commandment of God is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. (Exodus 20:16)

265. What are we commanded by the eighth commandment?

By the eighth commandment we are commanded to speak the truth in all things, but especially in what concerns the good name and honor of others.

Wherefore, put away lying and speak truth each one with his neighbor, because we are members of one another. (Ephesians 4:25)

266. What does the eighth commandment forbid?

The eighth commandment forbids lies, rash judgment, detraction, calumny, and the telling of secrets we are bound to keep.

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. (Proverbs 12:22)

267. When does a person commit the sin of rash judgment?

A person commits the sin of rash judgment when, without sufficient reason, he believes something harmful to another's character.

Before thou inquire, blame no man. (Ecclesiasticus 11:7)

268. When does a person commit the sin of detraction?

A person commits the sin of detraction when, without a good reason, he makes known the hidden faults of another.

A good name is better than great riches, and good favor is above silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1)

269. When does a person commit the sin of calumny or slander?

A person commits the sin of calumny or slander when by lying he injures the good name of another.

Devise not a lie against thy brother, neither do the like against thy friend. (Ecclesiasticus 7:13)

270. When are we obliged to keep a secret?

We are obliged to keep a secret when we have promised to do so, when our office requires it, or when the good of another demands it.

271. What must a person do who has sinned by detraction or calumny, or has told a secret he is bound to keep?

A person who has sinned by detraction or calumny, or who has told a secret he is bound to keep, must repair the harm he has done to his neighbor, as far as he is able.

272. What is the ninth commandment of God?

The ninth commandment of God is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. (Deuteronomy 5:21)

273. What are we commanded by the ninth commandment?

By the ninth commandment we are commanded to be pure in thought and desire.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. (Matthew 5:8)

274. Are mere thoughts about impure things always sinful in themselves?

Mere thoughts about impure things are not always sinful in themselves, but such thoughts are dangerous.

275. When do thoughts about impure things become sinful?

Thoughts about impure things become sinful when a person thinks of an unchaste act and deliberately takes pleasure in so thinking, or when unchaste desire or passion is aroused and consent is given to it.

276. What is forbidden by the ninth commandment?

The ninth commandment forbids all thoughts and desires contrary to chastity.

277. What is the tenth commandment of God?

The tenth commandment of God is: Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his house. (Deuteronomy 5:21)

278. What does the tenth commandment forbid?

The tenth commandment forbids all desire to take or to keep unjustly what belongs to others, and also forbids envy at their success.

Take heed and guard yourself from all covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. (Luke 12:15)

The Commandments of the Church; The First and Second Commandments

Lesson 21 from the Baltimore Catechism

279. Whence has the Catholic Church the right to make laws?

The Catholic Church has the right to make laws from Jesus Christ, who said to the apostles, the first bishops of His Church: "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven."

Amen I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven. (Matthew 18:18)

280. By whom is this right to make laws exercised?

This right to make laws is exercised by the bishops, the successors of the apostles, and especially by the Pope, who as the successor of the chief of the apostles, Saint Peter, has the right to make laws for the Universal Church.

And I say to thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matthew 16:18)

281. Which are the chief commandments, or laws, of the Church?

The chief commandments, or laws, of the Church are these six:

1. To assist at Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation.
2. To fast and to abstain on the days appointed.
3. To confess our sins at least once a year.
4. To receive Holy Communion during the Easter time.
5. To contribute to the support of the Church.
6. To observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage.

282. What sin does a Catholic commit who through his own fault misses Mass on a Sunday or holyday of obligation?

A Catholic who through his own fault misses Mass on a Sunday or holyday of obligation commits a mortal sin.

Keep you my sabbath; for it is holy unto you. (Exodus 31:14)

283. Which are the holy days of obligation in the United States?

The holydays of obligation in the United States are these six:

- Christmas Day (December 25)
- The Octave of the Nativity (January 1)
- Ascension Thursday (40 days after Easter)
- The Assumption (August 15)
- All Saints' Day (November 1)
- The Immaculate Conception (December 8)

284. What else does the Church oblige us to do on holy days of obligation?

The Church obliges us to abstain from servile work on holy days of obligation, just as on Sundays, as far as we are able.

285. Why were holy days instituted by the Church?

Holy days were instituted by the Church to remind us of the mysteries of our religion and of the important events in the lives of Christ and of His Blessed Mother, and to recall to us the virtues and the rewards of the saints.

286. What is a fast day?

A fast day is a day on which only one full meal is allowed, but in the morning and evening some food may be taken, the quantity and quality of which are determined by approved local custom.

287. Who are obliged to observe the fast days of the Church?

All baptized persons between the ages of twenty-one and fifty-nine are obliged to observe the fast days of the Church, unless they are excused or dispensed.

288. What is a day of abstinence?

A day of abstinence is a day on which we are not allowed the use of meat.

289. Who are obliged to observe the abstinence days of the Church?

All Catholics who have passed their fourteenth birthday and have attained the use of reason are obliged to observe the abstinence days of the Church, unless excused or dispensed.

290. Why does the Church command us to fast and to abstain?

The Church commands us to fast and to abstain in order that we may control the desires of the flesh, raise our minds more freely to God, and make satisfaction for sin.

But thou, when thou dost fast, anoint thy head wash thy face, so that thou mayest not be seen fasting by men, but by thy Father, who is in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee. (Matthew 6:18)

291. Why does the Church make Fridays of Lent days of abstinence?

The Church makes Fridays of Lent days of abstinence in order that we may do penance for our sins, and also in order that we may prepare ourselves more worthily for Good Friday, when we commemorate the death of Jesus Christ.

292. How can we know the days appointed for fast or abstinence?

We can know the days appointed for fast or abstinence from the instructions of our bishops and priests.

The Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Commandments of the Church

Lesson 22 from the Baltimore Catechism

293. What is meant by the commandment to confess our sins at least once a year?

By the commandment to confess our sins at least once a year is meant that we are strictly obliged to make a good confession within the year, if we have a mortal sin to confess.

Confess, therefore, your sins to one another. (James 5:16)

294. Why should we go to confession frequently?

We should go to confession frequently because frequent confession greatly helps us to overcome temptation, to keep in the state of grace, and to grow in virtue.

295. What sin does a Catholic commit who neglects to receive Holy Communion worthily during the Easter time?

A Catholic who neglects to receive Holy Communion worthily during the Easter time commits a mortal sin.

He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life everlasting and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (John 6:55-56)

296. What is the Easter time in the United States?

The Easter time in the United States begins on the first Sunday of Lent and ends on Trinity Sunday.

297. What is meant by the commandment to contribute to the support of the Church?

By the commandment to contribute to the support of the Church is meant that each of us is obliged to bear his fair share of the financial burden of the Holy See, of the diocese, and of the parish.

So also the Lord directed that those who preach the gospel should have their living from the gospel. (I Corinthians 9:14)

298. What is the ordinary law of the Church to be observed at the wedding of a Catholic?

The ordinary law of the Church to be observed at the wedding of a Catholic is this: A Catholic can contract a true marriage only in the presence of an authorized priest and two witnesses.

299. Does the Church forbid Catholics to contract marriage with certain persons?

The Church does forbid Catholics to contract marriage with certain persons, and the following are examples: first, a marriage with a non-Catholic; this is a mixed marriage; second, a marriage with a second cousin, or any relative closer than a second cousin.

300. Why does the Church forbid Catholics to marry non-Catholics?

The Church forbids Catholics to marry non-Catholics because mixed marriages often bring about family discord, loss of faith on the part of the Catholic, and neglect of the religious training of the children.

And it is better to die without children, than to leave ungodly children. (Ecclesiasticus 16:4)

301. Does the Church ever permit mixed marriages or marriages between close relatives?

For grave reasons the Church sometimes permits mixed marriages or marriages between close relatives; such a permission is called a dispensation.

302. Does the Church allow Catholics to marry during Lent and Advent?

The Church allows Catholics to marry during Lent and Advent, though they should do so without much festivity. A Nuptial Mass is now allowed during these seasons.

303. What is a Nuptial Mass?

A Nuptial Mass is a Mass which has special prayers to beg God's blessing on the married couple.

Part Three: The Sacraments and Prayer

The Sacraments

Lesson 23 from the Baltimore Catechism

304. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.

305. How many sacraments are there?

There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

306. From whom do the sacraments receive their power to give grace?

The sacraments receive their power to give grace from God, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Let a man so account us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Corinthians 4:1)

307. Do the sacraments give sanctifying grace?

The sacraments do give sanctifying grace.

Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:17)

308. Does each of the sacraments also give a special grace?

Each of the sacraments also gives a special grace, called sacramental grace, which helps one to carry out the particular purpose of that sacrament.

309. Do the sacraments always give grace?

The sacraments always give grace if we receive them with the right dispositions.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:27)

310. Why are Baptism and Penance called sacraments of the dead?

Baptism and Penance are called sacraments of the dead because their chief purpose is to give the supernatural life of sanctifying grace to souls spiritually dead through sin.

Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

311. Why are Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony called sacraments of the living?

Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony are called sacraments of the living because their chief purpose is to give more grace to souls already spiritually alive through sanctifying grace.

312. What sin does one commit who knowingly receives a sacrament of the living in mortal sin?

He who knowingly receives a sacrament of the living in mortal sin commits a mortal sin of sacrilege, because he treats a sacred thing with grave irreverence.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:27)

313. Which are the sacraments that can be received only once?

The sacraments that can be received only once are Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

314. Why can Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders be received only once?

Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders can be received only once because they imprint on the soul a spiritual mark, called a character, which lasts forever.

And do not grieve the Holy Ghost of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

Baptism

Lesson 24 from the Baltimore Catechism

315. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven.

Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

316. What sins does Baptism take away?

Baptism takes away original sin; and also actual sin and all the punishment due to them, if the person baptized be guilty of any actual sins and truly sorry for them.

Get up and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name. (Acts 22:16)

317. What are the effects of the character imprinted on the soul by Baptism?

The effects of the character imprinted on the soul by Baptism are that we become members of the Church, subject to its laws, and capable of receiving other sacraments.

318. Who can administer Baptism?

The priest is the usual minister of Baptism, but if there is danger that someone will die without Baptism, anyone else may and should baptize.

319. How would you give Baptism?

I would give Baptism by pouring ordinary water on the forehead of the person to be baptized, saying while pouring it: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

320. Why is Baptism necessary for the salvation of all men?

Baptism is necessary for the salvation of all men because Christ has said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Now they who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)

321. How can those be saved who through no fault of their own have not received the sacrament of Baptism?

Those who through no fault of their own have not received the sacrament of Baptism can be saved through what is called baptism of blood or baptism of desire.

322. How does an unbaptized person receive the baptism of blood?

An unbaptized person receives the baptism of blood when he suffers martyrdom for the faith of Christ.

Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

323. How does an unbaptized person receive the baptism of desire?

An unbaptized person receives the baptism of desire when he loves God above all things and desires to do all that is necessary for his salvation.

If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him. (John 14:23)

324. When should children be baptized?

Children should be baptized as soon as possible after birth.

325. What sin do Catholic parents commit who put off for a long time, or entirely neglect, the Baptism of their children?

Catholic parents who put off for a long time, or entirely neglect, the Baptism of their children, commit a mortal sin.

326. What do we promise through our godparents in Baptism?

We promise through our godparents in Baptism to renounce the devil and to live according to the teachings of Christ and of His Church.

327. Why is the name of a saint given in Baptism?

The name of a saint is given in Baptism in order that the person baptized may imitate his virtues and have him for a protector.

328. What is the duty of a godparent after Baptism?

The duty of a godparent after Baptism is to see that the child is brought up a good Catholic, if this is not done by the parents.

329. Who should be chosen as godparents for Baptism?

Only Catholics who know their faith and live up to the duties of their religion should be chosen as godparents for Baptism.

Confirmation

Lesson 25 from the Baltimore Catechism

330. What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the sacrament through which the Holy Ghost comes to us in a special way and enables us to profess our faith as strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

But I speak the truth to you; it is expedient for you that I depart. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. (John 16:7)

331. Who is the usual minister of Confirmation?

The bishop is the usual minister of Confirmation.

332. What does the bishop do when he gives Confirmation?

The bishop extends his hands over those who are to be confirmed, prays that they may receive the Holy Ghost, and, while laying his hand on the head of each person, anoints the forehead with holy chrism in the form of a cross.

And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)

333. What does the bishop say in anointing the person he confirms?

In anointing the person he confirms, the bishop says: "I sign you with the sign of the cross and I confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

334. What is holy chrism?

Holy chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balm, blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday.

335. What does the anointing of the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross signify?

The anointing of the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross signifies that the Catholic who is confirmed must always be ready to profess his faith openly and to practice it fearlessly.

336. Why does the bishop give the person he confirms a slight blow on the cheek?

The bishop gives the person he confirms a slight blow on the cheek to remind him that he must be ready to suffer everything, even death, for the sake of Christ.

337. What are the effects of Confirmation?

Confirmation increases sanctifying grace, gives its special sacramental grace, and imprints a lasting character on the soul.

And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)

338. What does the sacramental grace of Confirmation help us to do?

The sacramental grace of Confirmation helps us to live our faith loyally and to profess it courageously.

339. What is the character of Confirmation?

The character of Confirmation is a spiritual and indelible sign which marks the Christian as a soldier in the army of Christ.

340. What is necessary to receive Confirmation properly?

To receive Confirmation properly it is necessary to be in the state of grace, and to know well the chief truths and duties of our religion.

341. After we have been confirmed, why should we continue to study our religion even more earnestly than before?

After we have been confirmed, we should continue to study our religion even more earnestly than before, so that we may be able to explain and defend our faith, and thus cooperate with the grace of Confirmation.

342. Why should all Catholics be confirmed?

All Catholics should be confirmed in order to be strengthened against the dangers to salvation and to be prepared better to defend their Catholic faith.

The Holy Eucharist

Lesson 26 from the Baltimore Catechism

343. What is the Holy Eucharist?

The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice. In the Holy Eucharist, under the appearances of bread and wine, the Lord Christ is contained, offered, and received.

I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever. (John 6:51-52)

344. When did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?

Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the night before He died.

And having taken bread, he gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In like manner he took also the cup after the supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you." (Luke 22:19-20)

345. Who were present when Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist?

When Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist the apostles were present.

Now when the evening arrived, he came with the Twelve. (Mark 14:17)

346. How did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?

Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist in this way: He took bread, blessed and broke it, and giving it to His apostles, said: "Take and eat; this is My body"; then He took a cup of wine, blessed it, and giving it to them, said: "All of you drink of this; for this is My blood of the new covenant which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins"; finally, He gave His apostles the commission: "Do this in remembrance of Me."

And having taken bread, he gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In like manner he took also the cup after the supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you." (Luke 22:19-20)

347. What happened when Our Lord said: "This is My body . . . this is My blood"?

When Our Lord said, "This is My body," the entire substance of the bread was changed into His body; and when He said, "This is My blood," the entire substance of the wine was changed into His blood.

348. Did anything of the bread and wine remain after their substance had been changed into Our Lord's body and blood?

After the substance of the bread and wine had been changed into Our Lord's body and blood, there remained only the appearances of bread and wine.

349. What do we mean by the appearances of bread and wine?

By the appearances of bread and wine we mean their color, taste, weight, shape, and whatever else appears to the senses.

350. What is the change of the entire substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ called?

The change of the entire substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is called Transubstantiation.

351. Is Jesus Christ whole and entire both under the appearances of bread and under the appearances of wine?

Jesus Christ is whole and entire both under the appearances of bread and under the appearances of wine.

352. How was Our Lord able to change bread and wine into His body and blood?

Our Lord was able to change bread and wine into His body and blood by His almighty power.

All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28:18)

353. Does this change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ continue to be made in the Church?

The change of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ continues to be made in the Church by Jesus Christ, through the ministry of His priests.

354. When did Christ give His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood?

Christ gave His priests the power to change bread and wine into His body and blood when He made the apostles priests at the Last Supper by saying to them: "Do this in remembrance of Me."

355. How do priests exercise their power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ?

Priests exercise their power to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ by repeating at the Consecration of the Mass the words of Christ: "This is My Body ... this is My blood."

356. Why does Christ give us His own body and blood in the Holy Eucharist?

Christ gives us His own body and blood in the Holy Eucharist:

1. to be offered as a sacrifice commemorating and renewing for all time the sacrifice of the cross;
2. to be received by the faithful in Holy Communion;
3. to remain ever on our altars as the proof of His love for us, and to be worshiped by us.

The Sacrifice of the Mass

Lesson 27 from the Baltimore Catechism

357. What is the Mass?

The Mass is the sacrifice of the New Law in which Christ, through the ministry of the priest, offers Himself to God in an unbloody manner under the appearances of bread and wine.

For, from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation. (Malachi 1:11)

358. What is a sacrifice?

A sacrifice is the offering of a victim by a priest to God alone, and the destruction of it in some way to acknowledge that He is the Creator of all things.

359. Who is the principal priest in every Mass?

The principal priest in every Mass is Jesus Christ, who offers to His heavenly Father, through the ministry of His ordained priest, His body and blood which were sacrificed on the cross.

And having taken bread, he gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In like manner he took also the cup after the supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you." (Luke 22:19-20)

360. Why is the Mass the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross?

The Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross because in the Mass the victim is the same, and the principal priest is the same, Jesus Christ.

361. What are the purposes for which the Mass is offered?

The purposes for which the Mass is offered are: first, to adore God as our Creator and Lord; second, to thank God for His many favors; third, to ask God to bestow His blessings on all men; fourth, to satisfy the justice of God for the sins committed against Him.

362. Is there any difference between the sacrifice of the cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass?

The manner in which the sacrifice is offered is different. On the cross Christ physically shed His blood and was physically slain, while in the Mass there is no physical shedding of blood nor physical death, because Christ can die no more; on the cross Christ gained merit and satisfied for us, while in the Mass He applies to us the merits and satisfaction of His death on the cross.

For we know that Christ, having risen from the dead, dies now no more, death shall no longer have dominion over him. (Romans 6:9)

363. How should we assist at Mass?

We should assist at Mass with reverence, attention, and devotion.

364. What is the best method of assisting at Mass?

The best method of assisting at Mass is to unite with the priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice, and to receive Holy Communion.

364a. How can we best unite with the priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice?

We can best unite with the priest in offering the Holy Sacrifice by joining in mind and heart with Christ, the principal Priest and Victim, by following the Mass in a missal, and by reciting or chanting the responses.

365. Who said the first Mass?

Our Divine Savior said the first Mass, at the Last Supper, the night before He died.

Holy Communion

Lesson 28 from the Baltimore Catechism

366. What is Holy Communion?

Holy Communion is the receiving of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him. (John 6:57)

367. What is necessary to receive Holy Communion worthily?

To receive Holy Communion worthily it is necessary to be free from mortal sin, to have a right intention, and to obey the Church's laws on the fast required before Holy Communion out of reverence for the body and blood of Our Divine Lord. However, there are some cases in which Holy Communion may be received without fasting.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:27)

368. Does he who knowingly receives Holy Communion in mortal sin receive the body and blood of Christ and His graces?

He who knowingly receives Holy Communion in mortal sin receives the body and blood of Christ; but he does not receive His graces and he commits a grave sin of sacrilege.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:27)

369. What should we do to receive more abundantly the graces of Holy Communion?

To receive more abundantly the graces of Holy Communion we should strive to be most fervent and to free ourselves from deliberate venial sin.

370. Does the Church now command us to fast from midnight before Holy Communion?

The Church does not now command us to fast from midnight before Holy Communion, as it did formerly. The laws enacted by Pope Pius XII now regulate this matter by the number of hours we must fast.

371. When may Holy Communion be received without fasting?

Holy Communion may be received without fasting when one is in danger of death, or when it is necessary to save the Blessed Sacrament from insult or injury.

372. What are the laws enacted by Pope Pius XII regarding the fast required before Holy Communion?

The laws enacted by Pope Pius XII regarding the fast required before Holy Communion are the following:

1. Water may be taken at any time before Holy Communion without breaking the fast.
2. Sick persons, though not confined to bed, may receive Holy Communion after taking medicine or nonalcoholic drinks. A priest's permission is not necessary.
3. All Catholics may receive Holy Communion after fasting one hour from food and drink including even alcoholic beverages in moderation. This rule applies to Holy Communion at midnight Mass as well as at Masses celebrated in the morning, afternoon or evening. A priest's permission is not needed.
4. One may not receive Holy Communion a second time on the same day, unless the danger of death arises, when he can receive the Blessed Sacrament as Viaticum. But one who has received the Holy Eucharist at the midnight Mass of Christmas or at the Mass of the Easter Vigil may receive again in the course of the day. These rules show the Church's desire that all Catholics partake of the Holy Eucharist frequently.

373. How should we prepare ourselves for Holy Communion?

We should prepare ourselves for Holy Communion by thinking of Our Divine Redeemer whom we are about to receive, and by making fervent acts of faith, hope, love, and contrition.

Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. (Matthew 8:8)

374. What should we do after Holy Communion?

After Holy Communion we should spend some time adoring Our Lord, thanking Him, renewing our promises of love and of obedience to Him, and asking Him for blessings for ourselves and others.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)

375. What are the chief effects of a worthy Holy Communion?

The chief effects of a worthy Holy Communion are: first, a closer union with Our Lord and a more fervent love of God and of our neighbor; second, an increase of sanctifying grace; third, preservation from mortal sin and the remission of venial sin; fourth, the lessening of our inclinations to sin and the help to practice good works.

He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, abides in me and I in him. (John 6:57)

376. When are we obliged to receive Holy Communion?

We are obliged to receive Holy Communion during Easter time each year and when in danger of death.

377. Why is it well to receive Holy Communion often, even daily?

It is well to receive Holy Communion often, even daily, because this intimate union with Jesus Christ, the Source of all holiness and the Giver of all graces, is the greatest aid to a holy life.

And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles and in the communion of the breaking of the bread and in the prayers. (Acts 2:42)

378. How should we show our gratitude to Our Lord for remaining always on our altars in the Holy Eucharist?

We should show our gratitude to Our Lord for remaining always on our altars in the Holy Eucharist by visiting Him often, by reverence in church, by assisting every day at Mass when this is possible, by attending parish devotions, and by being present at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Penance

Lesson 29 from the Baltimore Catechism

379. What is the sacrament of Penance?

Penance is the sacrament by which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven through the absolution of the priest.

380. Whence has the priest the power to forgive sins?

The priest has the power to forgive sins from Jesus Christ, who said to His apostles and to their successors in the priesthood: "Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)

381. With what words does the priest forgive sins?

The priest forgives sins with the words: "I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

382. What are the effects of the sacrament of Penance, worthily received?

The effects of the sacrament of Penance, worthily received, are:

1. the restoration or increase of sanctifying grace;
2. the forgiveness of sins;
3. the remission of the eternal punishment, if necessary, and also of part, at least, of the temporal punishment, due to our sins;
4. the help to avoid sin in future;
5. the restoration of the merits of our good works if they have been lost by mortal sin.

383. What else does the sacrament of Penance do for us?

The sacrament of Penance also gives us the opportunity to receive spiritual advice and instruction from our confessor.

384. What must we do to receive the sacrament of Penance worthily?

To receive the sacrament of Penance worthily, we must:

1. examine our conscience;
2. be sorry for our sins;
3. have the firm purpose of not sinning again;
4. confess our sins to the priest;
5. be willing to perform the penance the priest gives us.

But if the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed and keep all my commandments and do judgment and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die. (Ezekiel 18:21)

385. What is an examination of conscience?

An examination of conscience is a sincere effort to call to mind all the sins we have committed since our last worthy confession.

386. What should we do before our examination of conscience?

Before our examination of conscience we should ask God's help to know our sins and to confess them with sincere sorrow.

387. How can we make a good examination of conscience?

We can make a good examination of conscience by calling to mind the commandments of God and of the Church, and the particular duties of our state of life, and by asking ourselves how we may have sinned with regard to them.

Contrition

Lesson 30 from the Baltimore Catechism

388. What is contrition?

Contrition is sincere sorrow for having offended God, and hatred for the sins we have committed, with a firm purpose of sinning no more.

Let the wicked man forsake his way and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord; and he will have mercy on him. (Isaiah 55:7)

389. Will God forgive us any sin unless we have true contrition for it?

God will not forgive us any sin, whether mortal or venial, unless we have true contrition for it.

Now therefore saith the Lord: "Be converted to me with all your heart, in fasting and in weeping and in mourning. And rend your hearts and not your garments. (Joel 2:12-13)

390. When is sorrow for sin true contrition?

Sorrow for sin is true contrition when it is interior, supernatural supreme, and universal.

Create a pure heart for me, O God, and renew in me a steadfast spirit. (Psalm 50:12)

391. When is our sorrow interior?

Our sorrow is interior when it comes from our heart, and not merely from our lips.

My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. (Psalm 50:19)

392. When is our sorrow supernatural?

Our sorrow is supernatural when, with the help of God's grace, it arises from motives which spring from faith and not merely from natural motives.

393. When is our sorrow supreme?

Our sorrow is supreme when we hate sin above every other evil, and are willing to endure any suffering rather than offend God in the future by sin.

394. When is our sorrow universal?

Our sorrow is universal when we are sorry for every mortal sin which we may have had the misfortune to commit.

Turn thy face away from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. (Psalm 50:11)

395. Should we always try to have sorrow for all our venial sins when receiving the sacrament of Penance?

We should try to have sorrow for all our venial sins when receiving the sacrament of Penance, and, when we have only venial sins to confess, we must have sorrow for at least one of them or for some sin of our past life which we confess.

396. Why should we have contrition for mortal sin?

We should have contrition for mortal sin because it is the greatest of all evils, gravely offends God, keeps us out of heaven, and condemns us forever to hell.

If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither; and they shall gather them up and cast them into the fire, and they shall burn. (John 15:6)

397. Why should we have contrition for venial sin?

We should have contrition for venial sin because it is displeasing to God, merits temporal punishment, and may lead to mortal sin.

398. How many kinds of contrition are there?

There are two kinds of contrition: perfect contrition and imperfect contrition.

399. When is our contrition perfect?

Our contrition is perfect when we are sorry for our sins because sin offends God, whom we love above all things for His own sake.

Create a pure heart for me, O God, and renew in me a steadfast spirit. (Psalm 50:12)

400. When is our contrition imperfect?

Our contrition is imperfect when we are sorry for our sins because they are hateful in themselves or because we fear God's punishment.

And the children of Israel said to the Lord, "We have sinned. Do thou unto us whatsoever pleaseth thee, only deliver us this time." (Judges 10:15)

401. To receive the sacrament of Penance worthily, what kind of contrition is sufficient?

To receive the sacrament of Penance worthily, imperfect contrition is sufficient.

402. Should we always try to have perfect contrition in the sacrament of Penance?

We should always try to have perfect contrition in the sacrament of Penance because perfect contrition is more pleasing to God, and because with His help we can always have it.

403. How can a person in mortal sin regain the state of grace before receiving the sacrament of Penance?

A person in mortal sin can regain the state of grace before receiving the sacrament of Penance by making an act of perfect contrition with the sincere purpose of going to confession.

404. What should we do if we have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin?

If we have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin, we should ask God's pardon and grace at once, make an act of perfect contrition, and go to confession as soon as we can.

Is it my will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live? (Ezekiel 18:23)

405. May we receive Holy Communion after committing a mortal sin if we merely make an act of perfect contrition?

We may not receive Holy Communion after committing a mortal sin if we merely make an act of perfect contrition; one who has sinned grievously must go to confession before receiving Holy Communion.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:27)

406. What is the firm purpose of sinning no more?

The firm purpose of sinning no more is the sincere resolve not only to avoid sin but to avoid as far as possible the near occasions of sin.

Go thy way, and from now on sin no more. (John 8:11)

407. What purpose of amendment must a person have if he has only venial sins to confess?

If a person has only venial sins to confess, he must have the purpose of avoiding at least one of them.

Confession

Lesson 31 from the Baltimore Catechism

408. What is confession?

Confession is the telling of our sins to an authorized priest for the purpose of obtaining forgiveness.

He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that shall confess and forsake them shall obtain mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

409. Why must we confess our sins?

We must confess our sins because Jesus Christ obliges us to do so in these words, spoken to the apostles and to their successors in the priesthood: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)

410. How do these words of Christ oblige us to confess our sins?

These words of Christ oblige us to confess our sins because the priest cannot know whether he should forgive or retain our sins unless we tell them to him.

411. Is it necessary to confess every sin?

It is necessary to confess every mortal sin which has not yet been confessed and forgiven; it is not necessary to confess our venial sins, but it is better to do so.

He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that shall confess and forsake them shall obtain mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)

412. What are the chief qualities of a good confession?

The chief qualities of a good confession are three: it must be humble, sincere, and entire.

413. When is our confession humble?

Our confession is humble when we accuse ourselves of our sins with a conviction of guilt for having offended God.

O God, be merciful to me the sinner! (Luke 18:13)

414. When is our confession sincere?

Our confession is sincere when we tell our sins honestly and frankly.

415. When is our confession entire?

Our confession is entire when we confess at least all our mortal sins, telling their kind, the number of times we have committed each sin, and any circumstances changing their nature.

When a man or woman shall have committed any of all the sins that men are wont to commit, and by negligence shall have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and offended: they shall confess their sin. (Numbers 5:6-7)

416. What are we to do if without our fault we forget to confess a mortal sin?

If without our fault we forget to confess a mortal sin, we may receive Holy Communion, because we have made a good confession and the sin is forgiven; but we must tell the sin in confession if it again comes to our mind.

417. What happens if we knowingly conceal a mortal sin in confession?

If we knowingly conceal a mortal sin in confession, the sins we confess are not forgiven; moreover, we commit a mortal sin of sacrilege.

418. What must a person do who has knowingly concealed a mortal sin in confession?

A person who has knowingly concealed a mortal sin in confession must confess that he has made a bad confession, tell the sin he has concealed, mention the sacraments he has received since that time, and confess all the mortal sins he has committed since his last good confession.

419. Why should a sense of shame and fear of telling our sins to the priest never lead us to conceal a mortal sin in confession?

A sense of shame and fear of telling our sins to the priest should never lead us to conceal a mortal sin in confession because this is a grave sacrilege, and also because the priest, who represents Christ Himself, is bound by the seal of the sacrament of Penance never to reveal anything that has been confessed to him.

Be not ashamed to confess thy sins. (Ecclesiasticus 4:31)

420. Why does the priest give us a penance after confession?

The priest gives us a penance after confession that we may make some atonement to God for our sins, receive help to avoid them in the future, and make some satisfaction for the temporal punishment due to them.

421. What kinds of punishment are due to sin?

Two kinds of punishment are due to sin: the eternal punishment of hell, due to unforgiven mortal sins, and temporal punishment, lasting only for a time, due to venial sins and also to mortal sins after they have been forgiven.

If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither; and they shall gather them up and cast them into the fire, and they shall burn. (John 15:6)

422. Does the sacrament of Penance, worthily received, always take away all punishment?

The sacrament of Penance, worthily received, always takes away all eternal punishment; but it does not always take away all temporal punishment.

Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)

423. Why does God require temporal punishment for sin?

God requires temporal punishment for sin to satisfy His justice, to teach us the great evil of sin, and to warn us not to sin again.

424. Where do we pay the debt of our temporal punishment?

We pay the debt of our temporal punishment either in this life or in purgatory.

The fire will assay the quality of everyone's work; if his work abides which he has built thereon, he will receive reward; if his work burns he will lose his reward, but himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (I Corinthians 3:13-15)

425. What are the chief means of satisfying the debt of our temporal punishment, besides the penance imposed after confession?

Besides the penance imposed after confession, the chief means of satisfying the debt of our temporal punishment are: prayer, attending Mass, fasting, almsgiving, the works of mercy, the patient endurance of sufferings, and indulgences.

Prayer is good with fasting and alms; more than to lay up treasures of gold. (Tobias 12:8)

How to Make a Good Confession

Lesson 32 from the Baltimore Catechism

426. Before entering the confessional, how should we prepare ourselves for a good confession?

Before entering the confessional, we should prepare ourselves for a good confession by taking sufficient time not only to examine our conscience but, especially, to excite in our hearts sincere sorrow for our sins and a firm purpose not to commit them again.

427. How should we begin our confession?

We should begin our confession in this manner: Entering the confessional, we kneel, and making the sign of the cross we say to the priest: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned"; and then we tell how long it has been since our last confession.

428. After telling the time of our last confession, what do we confess?

After telling the time of our last confession, if we have committed any mortal sins since that time we must confess them, and also any that we have forgotten in previous confessions, telling the nature and number of each; we may also confess any venial sins we wish to mention.

429. What should we do if we cannot remember the exact number of our mortal sins?

If we cannot remember the exact number of our mortal sins, we should tell the number as nearly as possible, or say how often we have committed the sins in a day, a week, a month, or a year.

430. What should we do when we have committed no mortal sin since our last confession?

When we have committed no mortal sin since our last confession, we should confess our venial sins or some sin told in a previous confession, for which we are again sorry, in order that the priest may give us absolution.

Remember not the sins of my youth nor my offenses. According to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake. (Psalm 24:7)

431. How should we end our confession?

We should end our confession by saying: "I am sorry for these and all the sins of my past life, especially for ..."; and then it is well to tell one or several of the sins which we have previously confessed and for which we are particularly sorry.

432. What should we do after confessing our sins?

After confessing our sins, we should answer truthfully any question the priest asks, seek advice if we feel that we need any, listen carefully to the spiritual instruction and counsel of the priest, and accept the penance he gives us.

433. What should we do when the priest is giving us absolution?

When the priest is giving us absolution, we should say from our heart the act of contrition in a tone to be heard by him.

434. What should we do after leaving the confessional?

After leaving the confessional we should return thanks to God for the sacrament we have received, beg Our Lord to supply for the imperfections of our confession, and promptly and devoutly perform our penance.

Temporal Punishment and Indulgences

Lesson 33 from the Baltimore Catechism

435. What is an indulgence?

An indulgence is the remission granted by the Church of the temporal punishment due to sins already forgiven.

Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)

436. How many kinds of indulgences are there?

There are two kinds of indulgences, plenary and partial.

437. What is a plenary indulgence?

A plenary indulgence is the remission of all the temporal punishment due to our sins.

438. What is a partial indulgence?

A partial indulgence is the remission of part of the temporal punishment due to our sins.

439. How does the Church by means of indulgences remit the temporal punishment due to sin?

The Church by means of indulgences remits the temporal punishment due to sin by applying to us from her spiritual treasury part of the infinite satisfaction of Jesus Christ and of the superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints.

For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, bearing witness in his own time. (I Timothy 2:5-6)

440. What is the superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints?

The superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints is that which they gained during their lifetime but did not need, and which the Church applies to their fellow members of the communion of saints.

441. What must we do to gain an indulgence for ourselves?

To gain an indulgence for ourselves we must be in the state of grace, have at least a general intention of gaining the indulgence, and perform the works required by the Church.

442. Can we gain indulgences for others?

We cannot gain indulgences for other living persons, but we can gain them for the souls in purgatory, since the Church makes most indulgences applicable to them.

It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins. (II Maccabees 12:46)

Extreme Unction and Holy Orders

Lesson 34 from the Baltimore Catechism

443. What is Extreme Unction?

Extreme Unction is the sacrament which, through the anointing with blessed oil by the priest, and through his prayer, gives health and strength to the soul and sometimes to the body when we are in danger of death from sickness, accident, or old age.

Is any one among you sick? Let him bring in the presbyters of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:14)

444. Who should receive Extreme Unction?

All Catholics who have reached the use of reason and are in danger of death from sickness, accident, or old age should receive Extreme Unction.

445. What are the effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction?

The effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction are:

1. an increase of sanctifying grace;
2. comfort in sickness and strength against temptation;
3. preparation for entrance into heaven by the remission of our venial sins and the cleansing of our souls from the remains of sin;
4. health of body when it is good for the soul.

And the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him. (James 5:15)

446. When does Extreme Unction take away mortal sin?

Extreme Unction takes away mortal sin when the sick person is unconscious or otherwise unaware that he is not properly disposed, but has made an act of imperfect contrition.

447. How should we prepare ourselves to receive Extreme Unction worthily?

We should prepare ourselves to receive Extreme Unction worthily by a good confession, by acts of faith, hope, charity, and, especially, by resignation to the will of God.

My son, in thy sickness, neglect not thyself, but pray to the Lord and he shall heal thee. (Ecclesiasticus 38:9)

448. Who can administer Extreme Unction?

Only a priest can administer Extreme Unction.

449. When is it advisable to call the priest to visit the sick?

It is advisable to call the priest to visit the sick in any serious illness, even though there be no apparent danger of death, as it is the duty of the priest to visit the sick and to administer to them the sacraments they need.

450. In case of sudden or unexpected death, should a priest be called?

In case of sudden or unexpected death a priest should be called always, because absolution and Extreme Unction can be given conditionally for some time after apparent death.

451. What is Holy Orders?

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which men receive the power and grace to perform the sacred duties of bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in the things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. (Hebrews 5:1)

452. What are some of the requirements that a man may receive Holy Orders worthily?

That a man may receive Holy Orders worthily it is necessary:

1. that he be in the state of grace and be of excellent character;
2. that he have the prescribed age and learning;
3. that he have the intention of devoting his life to the sacred ministry;
4. that he be called to Holy Orders by his bishop.

If anyone is eager for the office of bishops, he desires a good work. A bishop then, must be blameless, married but once, reserved, prudent, of good conduct, hospitable, a teacher, not a drinker or a brawler, but moderate, not quarrelsome, not avaricious. (1 Timothy 3:1-3)

452a. What is meant essentially by a vocation to the priesthood?

By a vocation to the priesthood is meant essentially that invitation to receive Holy Orders given by the proper ecclesiastical superior to a man who, after a sufficient period of preparation and trial, gives signs that he has been called by God to the priesthood.

452b. What are the chief signs that a man has been called by God to the priesthood?

The chief signs that a man has been called by God to the priesthood are: a sincere desire to become a priest, a virtuous life, and sufficient bodily health and intellectual ability to enable him to make the required studies and to perform the duties of the priestly life.

452c. Do religious brothers and sisters receive the sacrament of Holy Orders?

No; religious brothers and sisters do not receive the sacrament of Holy Orders, but they have received from God a vocation to dedicate their lives to His service.

453. What are the effects of ordination to the priesthood?

The effects of ordination to the priesthood are: first, an increase of sanctifying grace; second, sacramental grace, through which the priest has God's constant help in his sacred ministry; third, a character, lasting forever, which is a special sharing in the priesthood of Christ and which gives the priest special supernatural powers.

Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (Psalm 109:4)

454. What are the chief supernatural powers of the priest?

The chief supernatural powers of the priest are: to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to forgive sins in the sacrament of Penance.

Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)

455. Why should Catholics show reverence and honor to the priest?

Catholics should show reverence and honor to the priest because he is the representative of Christ Himself and the dispenser of His mysteries.

With all thy soul fear the Lord, and reverence his priests. (Ecclesiasticus 7:31)

456. Who is the minister of the sacrament of Holy Orders?

The bishop is the minister of the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Matrimony

Lesson 35 from the Baltimore Catechism

457. What is the sacrament of Matrimony?

Matrimony is the sacrament by which a baptized man and a baptized woman bind themselves for life in a lawful marriage and receive the grace to discharge their duties.

And God created man to his own image; to the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them. And God blessed them, saying "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth." (Genesis 1:27-28)

458. What are the chief duties of husband and wife in the married state?

The chief duties of husband and wife in the married state are to be faithful to each other, and to provide in every way for the welfare of the children God may give them.

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is becoming in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter towards them. (Colossians 3:18-19)

459. Why does the bond of the sacrament of Matrimony last until the death of husband or wife?

The bond of the sacrament of Matrimony lasts until the death of husband or wife because Christ has said: "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

A woman is bound as long as her husband is alive, but if her husband dies, she is free. (1 Corinthians 7:39)

460. What is meant by the unity of the sacrament of Matrimony?

By the unity of the sacrament of Matrimony is meant that the husband cannot during the life of his wife have another wife, nor the wife during the life of her husband have another husband.

461. Why is every true marriage between a baptized man and a baptized woman a sacrament?

Every true marriage between a baptized man and a baptized woman is a sacrament because Christ Himself raised every marriage of this kind to the dignity of a sacrament.

462. Why has the Catholic Church alone the right to make laws regulating the marriages of baptized persons?

The Catholic Church alone has the right to make laws regulating the marriages of baptized persons because the Church alone has authority over the sacraments and over sacred matters affecting baptized persons.

463. What authority has the State regarding the marriages of baptized persons?

Regarding the marriages of baptized persons, the State has the authority to make laws concerning their effects that are merely civil.

Then he said to them, "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21)

464. What is necessary to receive the sacrament of Matrimony worthily?

To receive the sacrament of Matrimony worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace, to know the duties of married life, and to obey the marriage laws of the Church.

For we are children of the saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God. (Tobias 8:5)

465. In whose presence do the laws of the Church require a Catholic to be married?

The laws of the Church require a Catholic to be married in the presence of the parish priest, or the bishop of the diocese, or a priest delegated by either of them, and before two witnesses.

466. What are the chief effects of the sacrament of Matrimony?

The chief effects of the sacrament of Matrimony are: first, an increase of sanctifying grace; second, the special help of God for husband and wife to love each other faithfully, to bear with each other's faults, and to bring up their children properly.

467. What should Catholics do to prepare for a holy and happy marriage?

To prepare for a holy and happy marriage, Catholics should:

1. pray that God may direct their choice;
2. seek the advice of their parents and confessors;
3. third practice the virtues, especially chastity;
4. frequently receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist.

Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought at a great price. Glorify God and bear him in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

468. How can Catholics best obtain God's blessing for their marriage?

Catholics can best obtain God's blessing for their marriage by being married at a Nuptial Mass and by receiving Holy Communion devoutly.

Sara also said, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us; and let us grow old both together in health." (Tobias 8:10)

The Sacramentals

Lesson 36 from the Baltimore Catechism

469. What are sacramentals?

Sacramentals are holy things or actions of which the Church makes use to obtain for us from God, through her intercession, spiritual and temporal favors.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. (John 3:14-15)

470. How do the sacramentals obtain favors from God?

The sacramentals obtain favors from God through the prayers of the Church offered for those who make use of them, and through the devotion they inspire.

471. What are the chief benefits obtained by the use of the sacramentals?

The chief benefits obtained by the use of the sacramentals are:

1. actual graces;
2. the forgiveness of venial sins;
3. the remission of temporal punishment;
4. health of body and material blessings;
5. protection from evil spirits.

472. Which are the chief kinds of sacramentals?

The chief kinds of sacramentals are:

- blessings given by priests and bishops;
- exorcisms against evil spirits; third, blessed objects of devotion.

473. Which are the blessed objects of devotion most used by Catholics?

The blessed objects of devotion most used by Catholics are: holy water, candles, ashes, palms, crucifixes, medals, rosaries, scapulars, and images of Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the saints.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. (Luke 1:10)

474. How should we make use of sacramentals?

We should make use of the sacramentals with faith and devotion, and never make them objects of superstition.

Prayer

Lesson 37 from the Baltimore Catechism

475. What is prayer?

Prayer is the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God.

Let us lift up our hearts with our hands to the Lord in the heavens. (Lamentations 3:41)

476. Why do we pray?

We pray:

1. to adore God, expressing to Him our love and loyalty;
2. to thank Him for His favors;
3. to obtain from Him the pardon of our sins and the remission of their punishment;
4. to ask for graces and blessings for ourselves and others.

Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. (Matthew 26:41)

477. How should we pray?

We should pray:

1. with attention;
2. with a conviction of our own helplessness and our dependence upon God;
3. with a great desire for the graces we beg of Him;
4. with loving trust in His goodness;
5. with perseverance.

And all things whatever you ask for in prayer, believing, you shall receive. (Matthew 21:22)

478. For whom should we pray?

We should pray especially for ourselves, for our parents, relatives, friends, and enemies, for sinners, for the souls in purgatory, for the Pope, bishops, and priests of the Church, and for the officials of our country.

But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:44-45)

479. How do we know that God always hears our prayers if we pray properly?

We know that God always hears our prayers if we pray properly because Our Lord has promised: "If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you."

And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, in order that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (John 14:13)

480. Why do we not always obtain what we pray for?

We do not always obtain what we pray for, either because we have not prayed properly or because God sees that what we are asking would not be for our good.

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it upon your passions. (James 4:3)

481. Are distractions in our prayers always displeasing to God?

Distractions in our prayers are not displeasing to God, unless they are willful.

482. How many kinds of prayer are there?

There are two kinds of prayer: mental prayer and vocal prayer.

483. What is mental prayer?

Mental prayer is that prayer by which we unite our hearts with God while thinking of His holy truths.

For the rest, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever lovable, whatever of good repute, if there be any virtue, if anything worthy of praise, think upon these things. (Philippians 4:8)

484. What is vocal prayer?

Vocal prayer is that prayer which comes from the mind and heart and is spoken by the lips.

With my voice I called upon the Lord, and he hearkened to me from his holy mountain. (Psalm 3:5)

485. May we use our own words in praying to God?

We may use our own words in praying to God, and it is well to do so often.

486. What are the prayers that every Catholic should know by heart?

The prayers that every Catholic should know by heart are: the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, the Confiteor, the Glory be to the Father, and the acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition.

487. How do we usually begin and end our prayers?

We usually begin and end our prayers with the sign of the cross.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19)

488. Why do we make the sign of the cross?

We make the sign of the cross to express two important mysteries of the Christian religion, the Blessed Trinity and the Redemption.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. (John 1:14)

489. How are these mysteries expressed by the sign of the cross?

When we say "In the name," we express the truth that there is only one God; when we say "of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we express the truth that there are three distinct Persons in God; and when we make the form of the cross on ourselves, we express the truth that the Son of God, made man, redeemed us by His death on the cross.

The Our Father

Lesson 38 from the Baltimore Catechism

490. Why is the Our Father the best of all prayers?

The Our Father is the best of all prayers because it is the Lord's Prayer, taught us by Jesus Christ Himself, and because it is a prayer of perfect and unselfish love. See Matthew 6:9-13 for the Lord's Prayer.

491. Why is the Our Father a prayer of perfect and unselfish love?

The Our Father is a prayer of perfect and unselfish love because in saying it we offer ourselves entirely to God and ask from Him the best things, not only for ourselves but also for our neighbor.

492. Why do we address God as "Our Father who art in heaven"?

We address God as "Our Father who art in heaven" because we belong to Him, our loving Father, who created us and watches over us, who adopts us through sanctifying grace as His children, and who destines us to live forever with Him in heaven, our true home.

In my Father's house, there are many mansions. (John 14:2)

493. For what do we pray when we say "hallowed be Thy name"?

When we say "hallowed be Thy name," we pray that God may be known and honored by all men.

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is worthy of praise. (Psalm 112:3)

494. For what do we pray when we say "Thy kingdom come"?

When we say "Thy kingdom come," we pray that the kingdom of God's grace may be spread throughout the world, that all men may come to know and to enter the true Church and to live as worthy members of it, and that, finally, we all may be admitted to the kingdom of God's glory.

You therefore be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

495. For what do we pray when we say "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"?

When we say "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we pray that all men may obey God on earth as willingly as the saints and angels obey Him in heaven.

Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will but thine be done. (Luke 22:41)

496. For what do we pray when we say "Give us this day our daily bread"?

When we say "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray that God will give us each day all that is necessary to support the material life of our bodies and the spiritual life of our souls.

For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (John 6:56)

497. For what do we pray when we say "and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us"?

When we say "and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," we pray that God will pardon the sins by which we have offended Him, and we tell Him that we pardon our fellow men who have offended us.

For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you your offenses. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your offenses. (Matthew 6:14-15)

498. For what do we pray when we say "and lead us not into temptation"?

When we say "and lead us not into temptation," we pray that God will always give us the grace to overcome the temptations to sin which come to us from the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee. (Tobias 12:13)

499. For what do we pray when we say "but deliver us from evil"?

When we say "but deliver us from evil," we pray that God will always protect us from harm, and especially from harm to our souls.

I do not pray that thou take them out of the world, but that thou keep them from evil. (John 17:15)