

Have you ever been asked What the Catholic Church believes about...

THE POPE

MARRIAGE

THE EUCHARIST

MARY

CELIBACY

PURGATORY

SCRIPTURE

THE PRIESTHOOD

SEXUAL MORALITY

CONFESSION

TRADITION

CATHOLIC WEB SITES

www.ewtn.com

-Eternal Word Television Network's web site. You can e-mail questions about the faith. Good Catholic store and news center. Also has a link to their wonderful radio and TV programs

'...In your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an explanation to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence;' 1 Peter 3:15

www.scripturecatholic.com	-Good site with resources on how to defend our Faith.
www.catholic.com	-Catholic Answer's web site. This group can answer any questions about what we believe and why. They will also show you clear ways to explain our faith to non-Catholics. Very good resource. For quick answers on Catholic beliefs you can call their help line (619) 387-7200
www.vatican.va/	-Official Vatican web site
www.vaticanbookstore.com	-Official Vatican Library web site.
www.newadvent.org	-This site has the complete Catholic encyclopedia on file, Church Fathers, Catholic news and much more.
www.rachelsvineyard.org	-Site that helps post-abortion healing for women and men. You can also call them at 1-877-HOPE4ME.
www.priestsforlife.org	-Excellent site for all sorts of Pro-Life info.
www.familylifecenter.net	-Catholic web site for families. Also site of St. Joseph's Covenant Keepers, a Catholic men's group.
www.catholickidsnet.org	-National club for kids 6-12. Great way for kids to learn their faith and have fun too!
www.ignatius.com	-Very good Catholic publisher.

Excellent Catholic Books

'To Know Christ Jesus' by Frank Sheed. Wonderful classic about the life of Jesus, combining Scripture with historical data about the Jewish people to paint a great picture of what life was like in 1st century Israel.

'Handbook of Christian Apologetics' By Peter Kreeft & Fr. Ronald K. Tacelli. This book actually presents many of the arguments *against* our Faith, and then proceeds to clearly refute them. Topics include: Existence of God & God's nature, Revelation, faith and reason, the problem of evil, creation and evolution, providence and free will, miracles, the Bible's historical reality, Christianity and other religions, and objective truth. Dr. Kreeft is a professor of Philosophy at Boston College and has written many fantastic books about the Catholic Faith, philosophy, current moral issues and more. We have many of them in our library and all of them are highly recommended.

'Born Fundamentalist, Born Again Catholic' by David Currie. Excellent book that began as a letter David wrote to his Protestant family about the reasons for his conversion to the Catholic Faith. He does a very good job presenting all the major Catholic teachings with the Scriptural and historical reasons for them.

Saints. Any of the many books by Louis De Wohl about the saints are excellent. He uses fictional characters to tell the actual stories of many of our saint's lives. Including; St. Dominic, St. Catherine, St. Ignatius, St. Francis.

Correcting Common Misconceptions about the Catholic Faith

Beliefs of all Christians

- We believe in One God in 3 persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Jesus is fully God, yet fully man. Two natures in one person.
- Salvation is a free gift from Jesus; it can not be earned, only accepted.

What Catholics do not believe:

- ❖ **Catholics do not believe that you ‘work your way to Heaven’.** But that as James taught us:
‘What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. John 2:14
(See also John 15:8, CCC Para. 1996)
- ❖ **Catholics do not equate Mary with God.** But we do hold her in high esteem and call her blessed, just as she said we would do in Luke 1:48. (See also Rev. 12:1, CCC Para. 970)
- ❖ **Catholics do not worship graven images.** Statues are used in the Catholic Faith to help us remember our brethren in Jesus, just as today we use pictures. The first commandment refers to *worshipping idols*, not having statues or any graven images. God cannot contradict Himself, yet He commands graven images to be put on the Ark (Ex. 25:18, see also Nu. 21:8, 1 Kings 6:23, 7:23-29). Finally, if the commandment really means ‘all graven images’ then the statues in Washington are all sins and so are Christmas nativity scenes. (See CCC Para. 2112 & 2132)
- ❖ **Catholics do not believe that Jesus is sacrificed repeatedly at every Mass.** Since Jesus is God and outside time so is His sacrifice. At every Mass He actually makes us spiritually present 2,000 years ago when He died. Think of it as if you taped a show and watched it later, but in a supernatural way. Jesus’ dying for our sins is applied to us personally 2,000 years later, even though we weren’t there, it is the same with the Mass. (See CCC Para. 1545, 1367)
- ❖ **Catholics do not worship Mary and the other Saints.** The word ‘pray’ in English can mean to worship or to petition. We ask (petition) the Saints to pray *to Jesus* for us. (See CCC Para. 956)
- ❖ **We do not believe that the Pope is perfect or sinless.** Our Faith believes that when the Pope teaches on matters of faith and morals that the Holy Spirit will keep him from teaching error. Just as the same Holy Spirit made sinful, imperfect men write perfect, inspired Scripture. (See MT 16:16, JN 21:15-17, CCC Para. 891, 2035, 2051)
- ❖ **Priests do not forgive our sins, they convey God’s forgiveness to us.** Jesus gave this power:
‘Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." John 20:20
Notice that Jesus gives them the authority to forgive other people’s sins *or* to hold them bound, exactly the Sacrament of Penance (Confession). (See also MT 18:18, James 5:13, CCC Para. 1446-49).
- ❖ **Catholics do not believe that Purgatory is a ‘Second Chance’ at Heaven,** but it is where those who are already going to Heaven, but need to have the last vestiges of sin or temptation to sin removed, must go first. (See 1 Cor. 3:11, CCC Para. 1030-1032).

What does the Catholic Church believe about: The Pope?

Pope: The successor of St. Peter as Bishop of Rome and Supreme Pontiff of the universal Catholic Church. The pope exercises a primacy of authority as Vicar of Christ and shepherd of the whole Church; he receives the divine

assistance promised by Christ to the Church when he defines infallibly a doctrine of faith or morals (CCC Glossary).

Infallibility: The gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church whereby the pastors of the Church, the pope and bishops in union with him, can definitively proclaim a doctrine of faith or morals for the belief of the faithful. This gift is related to the inability of the whole body of the faithful to err in matters of faith and morals. (CCC Glossary)

‘Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."' Matthew 16:16

- **Another way to see it: The Pope is Jesus’ prime minister on earth while Jesus is the King in Heaven.** Jesus gives Peter authority and the promise of infallibility in MT 16. Reference Is. 22:20-23 to see how authority was given in the Davidic kingdom and how closely it mirrors Jesus’ words. The keys denote a continuing office and it has been so for the last 2,000 years and the 264 popes that followed Peter.

(See also LK 32:22, JN 21:15, CCC 2035, 891-892, 2051)

‘If I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.’ 1 Tim. 3: 15

- **St. Paul teaches us that the Church is the pillar and foundation of truth.** Catholics believe that the Holy Spirit keeps the Catholic Church from teaching error on matters of faith and morals. In other words: When teaching officially, as the Pope, he will be unable to teach error. **This is no different than the Holy Spirit using sinful, imperfect men to write perfect, inspired Scripture (as all Christians believe).** If God allowed the Church to teach doctrinal error than how can it be the pillar and foundation of truth St. Paul calls it? Jesus teaches us if we don’t built on a sure foundation it will fall (MT 7:24). In 20 centuries the Catholic Church has never contradicted a declared doctrine, though we have understood them better and gone deeper into their meaning over time.

What Catholics Do Not Believe About the Pope:

- **We do not believe that the Pope is perfect or sinless in his personal life.** Infallibility has to do with the Church being prevented from teaching error, not a person’s holiness. It is possible that a Pope may not be the most politically astute or have failings in other areas, but the Holy Spirit will not allow him to teach error when teaching as the Pope on matters of morals or doctrine.

Peter’s Primacy in Scripture

Peter alone is the *Rock* upon which Jesus builds His Church (Matthew 16:18). Christ appears here not as the foundation, but as the architect who "builds." Moreover, *Rock* embodies a metaphor applied to him by Christ in a sense analogous to the suffering and despised Messiah (1 Peter 2:4-8; cf. Matthew 21:42). Without a solid foundation a house falls. The *Good Shepherd* (John 10:11) gives us other shepherds (*pastors*) as well (Ephesians 4:11).

Peter alone is given *the keys of the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 16:19).

Peter is individually given the power to *bind* and *loose* (Matthew 16:19).

Peter’s name occurs first in all lists of Apostles (Matthew 10:2, Mark 3:16, Luke 6:14 Acts 1:13). Matthew even calls him the *first* (10:2). Judas Iscariot is invariably mentioned last.

Peter’s name is mentioned more often than all the other disciples put together: 191 times (162 as *Peter* or *Simon Peter*, 23 as *Simon*, and 6 as *Cephas*). John is next in frequency with only 4 appearances, and Peter is present 50% of the time we find John in the Bible! Archbishop Fulton Sheen

reckoned that all the other disciples combined were mentioned 130 times. If this is correct, Peter is named a remarkable 60% of the time any disciple is referred to!

Peter is almost without exception named first whenever he appears with anyone else. In one (only?) example to the contrary, Galatians 2:9, where he (*Cephas*) is listed after James and before John, he is clearly preeminent in the entire context (for example, 1:18-19, 2:7-8).

Peter alone among the Apostles receives a new name, *Rock*, solemnly conferred (John 1:42, Matthew 16:18).

Likewise, Peter is regarded by Jesus as the Chief Shepherd after Himself (John 21:15-17), singularly by name, and over the universal Church, even though others have a similar but subordinate role (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2).

Peter alone among the Apostles is mentioned by name as having been prayed for by Jesus Christ in order that his *faith may not fail* (Luke 22:32).

Peter alone among the Apostles is exhorted by Jesus to *strengthen your brethren* (Luke 22:32).

Peter first confesses Christ's Messiahship and divinity (Matthew 16:16).

Peter alone is told that he has received divine knowledge by a special revelation (Matthew 16:17).

Peter is regarded by the Jews (Acts 4:1-13) as the leader and spokesman of Christianity.

Peter is regarded by the common people in the same way (Acts 2:37-41, 5:15).

Jesus Christ uniquely associates Himself and Peter in the miracle of the tribute-money (Matthew 17:24-27).

Peter is specified by an angel as the leader and representative of the Apostles (Mark 16:7).

Peter leads the Apostles in fishing (John 21:2-3,11). The "bark" (boat) of Peter has been regarded by Catholics as a figure of the Church, with Peter at the helm.

Peter's words are the first recorded and most important in the upper room before Pentecost (Acts 1:15-22).

Peter takes the lead in calling for a replacement for Judas (Acts 1:22).

Peter is the first person to speak (and only one recorded) after Pentecost, so he was the first Christian to "preach the gospel" in the Church era (Acts 2:14-36).

Peter works the first miracle of the Church Age, healing a lame man (Acts 3:6-12).

Peter utters the first *anathema* (Ananias and Sapphira) – emphatically affirmed by God (Acts 5:2-11)!

Peter's shadow works miracles (Acts 5:15).

Peter is the first person after Christ to raise the dead (Acts 9:40).

Cornelius is told by an angel to seek out Peter for instruction in Christianity (Acts 10:1-6).

Peter is the first to receive the Gentiles, after a revelation from God (Acts 10:9-48).

Peter instructs the other Apostles on the catholicity (universality) of the Church (Acts 11:5-17).

Peter presides over and opens the first Council of Christianity, and lays down principles afterwards accepted by it (Acts 15:7-11).

Paul distinguishes the Lord's post-Resurrection appearances to Peter from those to other Apostles (1 Corinthians 15:4-8). The two disciples on the road to Emmaus make the same distinction (Luke 24:34), in this instance mentioning only Peter (*Simon*), even though they themselves had just seen the risen Jesus within the previous hour (Luke 24:33).

Peter is often spoken of as distinct among Apostles (Mark 1:36, Luke 9:28,32, Acts 2:37, 5:29, 1 Corinthians 9:5).

Peter is often spokesman for the other Apostles, especially at climactic moments (Mark 8:29, Matthew 18:21, Luke 9:5, 12:41, John 6:67 ff.).

Peter is the first to recognize and refute heresy, in Simon Magus (Acts 8:14-24).

Peter's proclamation at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-41) contains a fully authoritative interpretation of Scripture, a doctrinal decision and a disciplinary decree concerning members of the *House of Israel* (2:36) – an example of *binding* and *loosing*.

Peter was the first "charismatic", having judged authoritatively the first instance of the gift of tongues as genuine (Acts 2:14-21).

Peter is the first to preach Christian repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38).

Peter commanded the first Gentile Christians to be baptized (Acts 10:44-48).

Paul went to Jerusalem specifically to see Peter for fifteen days in the beginning of his ministry (Galatians 1:18), and was commissioned by Peter, James and John (Galatians 2:9) to preach to the Gentiles.

Peter acts, by strong implication, as the chief bishop/shepherd of the Church (1 Peter 5:1), since he exhorts all the other bishops, or *elders*.

Peter corrects those who misuse Paul's writings (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Peter wrote his first epistle from Rome, according to most scholars, as its bishop, and as the universal bishop (or, pope) of the early Church. *Babylon* (1 Peter 5:13) is regarded by many commentators as a code name for Rome.

(Taken from 'Biblical Evidence for Catholicism' by Dave Armstrong)

What does the Catholic Church believe about:

Tradition and Scripture

TRADITION: The living transmission of the message of the Gospel in the Church. The oral preaching of the Apostles, and the written message of salvation under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Bible), are

conserved and handed on as the deposit of faith through the apostolic succession in the Church. Both the living Tradition and the written Scriptures have their common source in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ... (CCC Glossary)

"Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God" (CCC Para. 97)

‘To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter.’ 2 Thess. 2:14

‘I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.’ 1 Tim. 3:15

- ❖ **Jesus gave the Church a deposit of Faith that includes written Tradition (the Scriptures) and oral tradition.** The two sources do not contradict each other, but complement. Both together give us the full faith Jesus left us through His Apostles. (See 2 Tim. 1:13-14, 2 Tim. 2:2, 1 Cor. 11:2, 2 Thess. 3:6 and CCC Para. 75-83, 126).
- ❖ **Jesus condemned ‘Traditions of Men’ (Mt 15:3, Mk 7:8) because they were equating their manmade laws with God’s, however, He did not condemn all tradition.** If Jesus meant *all* then what does Paul mean in his many passages upholding tradition? Obviously, Paul’s tradition is different and given to us by Jesus. It was to be held onto and followed (2 Thess. 2:14 and 2 Tim. 2:2). The Catholic Church has kept that oral Tradition for 2,000 years. (CCC Para. 77)
- ❖ **The Catholic Church has never added anything to the traditions it received from Jesus through His Apostles,** but we have understood them better over the centuries. (CCC Para. 94)
- ❖ **The list of the books of that belong in the Bible is not part of the inspired Word of God.** In other words, the Bible is a collection of different books written over many centuries by different authors, so how do we know which books were inspired by the Holy Spirit and belong in the Bible? The only way is through that oral Tradition and the authority of the Catholic Church. (Read ‘Where we got the Bible – by Henry Graham). (See also CCC Para. 120-127)
- ❖ **Nowhere does the Bible claim to be sufficient by itself.** In 2 Tim. 3:16 it does teach us that Scripture is ‘profitable’, but it does not say ‘sufficient’. That makes perfect sense if you consider history. Until the invention of the printing press, about 500 years ago, a single Bible could take over a year to copy by hand and would cost an average person a *few years* wages. Consider that for most of the centuries of Christianity the overwhelming majority of the world could not even read (By most estimates well over 90% illiteracy until the 1600’s). So even if someone could afford a Bible, the chances of them being able to read and interpret it for themselves was incredibly slim. The primary way the Gospels have always been spread is through preaching and teaching of the Church.

History of Oral and Written Tradition from the early Church Leaders:

PAPIAS "Papias [A.D. 120], who is now mentioned by us, affirms that he received the sayings of the apostles from those who accompanied them, and he, moreover, asserts that he heard in person Aristion and the presbyter John. Accordingly, he mentions them frequently by name, and in his writings gives their traditions [concerning Jesus]. . . . [There are] other passages of his in which he relates some miraculous deeds, stating that he acquired the knowledge of them from tradition" (fragment in Eusebius, Church History 3:39 [A.D. 312]).

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA "At that time [A.D. 150] there flourished in the Church Hegesippus, whom we know from what has gone before, and Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, and another bishop, Pinytus of Crete, and besides these, Philip, and Apollinarius, and Melito, and Musanus, and Modestus, and, finally, Irenaeus. From them has come down to us in writing, the sound and orthodox faith received from tradition" (Church History 4:21).

IRENAEUS "As I said before, the Church, having received this preaching and this faith, although she is disseminated throughout the whole world, yet guarded it, as if she occupied but one house. She likewise believes these things just as if she had but one soul and one and the same heart; and harmoniously she proclaims them and teaches them and hands them down, as if she possessed but one mouth. For, while the languages of the world are diverse, nevertheless, the authority of the tradition is one and the same" (Against Heresies 1:10:2 [A.D. 189]).

"That is why it is surely necessary to avoid them [heretics], while cherishing with the utmost diligence the things pertaining to the Church, and to lay hold of the tradition of truth. . . . What if the apostles had not in fact left writings to us? Would it not be necessary to follow the order of tradition, which was handed down to those to whom they entrusted the churches?" (ibid., 3:4:1).

"It is possible, then, for everyone in every church, who may wish to know the truth, to contemplate the tradition of the apostles which has been made known throughout the whole world. And we are in a position to enumerate those who were instituted bishops by the apostles and their successors to our own times—men who neither knew nor taught anything like these heretics rave about.

"But since it would be too long to enumerate in such a volume as this the successions of all the churches, we shall confound all those who, in whatever manner, whether through self-satisfaction or vainglory, or through blindness and wicked opinion, assemble other than where it is proper, by pointing out here the successions of the bishops of the greatest and most ancient church known to all, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, that church which has the tradition and the faith which comes down to us after having been announced to men by the apostles.

"With this church, because of its superior origin, all churches must agree—that is, all the faithful in the whole world—and it is in her that the faithful everywhere have maintained the apostolic tradition" (ibid., 3:3:1–2).

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA "Well, they preserving the tradition of the blessed doctrine derived directly from the holy apostles, Peter, James, John, and Paul, the sons receiving it from the father (but few were like the fathers), came by God's will to us also to deposit those ancestral and apostolic seeds. And well I know that they will exult; I do not mean delighted with this tribute, but solely on account of the preservation of the truth, according as they delivered it. For such a sketch as this, will, I think, be agreeable to a soul desirous of preserving from loss the blessed tradition" (Miscellanies 1:1 [A.D. 208]).

ORIGEN "Although there are many who believe that they themselves hold to the teachings of Christ, there are yet some among them who think differently from their predecessors. The teaching of the Church has indeed been handed down through an order of succession from the apostles and remains in the churches even to the present time. That alone is to be believed as the truth which is in no way at variance with ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition" (The Fundamental Doctrines 1:2 [A.D. 225]).

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE "[T]he Church is one, and as she is one, cannot be both within and without. For if she is with Novatian, she was not with [Pope] Cornelius. But if she was with Cornelius, who succeeded the bishop Fabian by lawful ordination, and whom, beside the honor of the priesthood the Lord glorified also with martyrdom, Novatian is not in the Church; nor can he be reckoned as a bishop, who, succeeding to no one, and despising the evangelical and apostolic tradition, sprang from himself. For he who has not been ordained in the Church can neither have nor hold to the Church in any way" (Letters 75:3 [A.D. 253]).

To access the actual translated documents of the Early Church Fathers online go to: www.ccel.org/fathers2

What does the Catholic Church believe about: The Eucharist?

Transubstantiation: . . . The unique change of the Eucharistic bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. Transubstantiation indicates that through the consecration of the bread and the wine there occurs the change of the entire substance of the bread into the substance of the Body of Christ, and of the entire substance of the wine into the Blood of Christ - even though the appearances or species of bread and wine remain. (CCC Glossary)

‘The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?’ 1 Cor. 10:16

- ❖ **If man can change the property of something (i.e. iron to molten liquid or wood to smoke and ash) then why question if our all-powerful God can change something’s substance without changing its appearance?** It is not a question of whether God is *able* to do this, but whether He *chooses* to:

‘I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.’ The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me.” John 6:47

- ❖ **If Jesus meant the above in only a symbolic way then why did many disciples leave Him over this (Verse 66 of the same passage)?** Notice also that Jesus does not correct them when they assume He means actually eating His flesh, but encourages that understanding by saying, ‘*Truly, truly*’ and it ‘*is food indeed*’. (See also CCC Para. 1333-42, 1374-75, 1413)
- ❖ **‘Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.’ 1 Cor. 11:27**

Here you see the Catholic teaching on Eucharist and why Catholics cannot receive Communion if they are in serious sin. This is also one reason non-Catholics are not given Communion in the Catholic Church. (See also CCC Para. 1355, 1385-87, 1395, 1415, 1650, 2120)

- ❖ **How did the early Church leaders see this?** Here’s St. Ignatius (Bishop of Antioch and martyred around 117 A.D. He and Polycarp were taught by St. John the Evangelist personally):

"I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible" (*Epistle to the Romans 7:3 [A.D. 110]*)...

"Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God...They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes" (*Epistle to the Smyrnaeans 6:2; 7:1 [A.D. 110]*).

Church leaders from the first 2 centuries of Christianity on the Eucharist

JUSTIN MARTYR: "We call this food Eucharist, and no one else is permitted to partake of it, except one who believes our teaching to be true and who has been washed in the washing which is for the remission of sins and for regeneration [baptism] and is thereby living as Christ enjoined. For not as common bread nor common drink do we receive these; but since Jesus Christ our Savior was made incarnate by the word of God and had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught, the food which has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer set down by him, and by the change of which our blood and flesh is nurtured, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnated Jesus" (First Apology 66:1-20 [A.D. 148]).

IRENÆUS : "He has declared the cup, a part of creation, to be his own blood, from which he causes our blood to flow; and the bread, a part of creation, he has established as his own body, from which he gives increase unto our bodies. When, therefore, the mixed cup [wine and water] and the baked bread receives the Word of God and becomes the Eucharist, the body of Christ, and from these the substance of our flesh is increased and supported, how can they say that the flesh is not capable of receiving the gift of God, which is eternal life--flesh which is nourished by the body and blood of the Lord, and is in fact a member of him?" (Against Heresies 5:2 [A.D. 148]).

Tertullian: "The flesh, indeed, is washed [in baptism], in order that the soul may be cleansed . . . the flesh is shadowed with the imposition of hands [in confirmation], that the soul also may be illuminated by the Spirit; the flesh feeds [in the Eucharist] on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul likewise may be filled with God" (The Resurrection of the Dead 8 [A.D. 210]).

Hippolytus: "'And she [Wisdom] has furnished her table' [Prov. 9:2] . . . refers to his [Christ's] honored and undefiled body and blood, which day by day are administered and offered sacrificially at the spiritual divine table, as a memorial of that first and ever-memorable table of the spiritual divine supper [i.e., the Last Supper]" (Fragment from Commentary on Proverbs [A.D. 217]).

Origen: "Formerly there was baptism in an obscure way . . . now, however, in full view, there is regeneration in water and in the Holy Spirit. Formerly, in an obscure way, there was manna for food; now, however, in full view, there is the true food, the flesh of the Word of God, as he himself says: 'My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink' [John 6:55]" (Homilies on Numbers 7:2 [A.D. 248]).

CCC – Catechism of the Catholic Church (this is the official teaching of the Catholic Church). To access it online: www.kofc.org/faith/catechism

***Note: The Christian Churches that broke away before the Protestant break in the 1600's (Orthodox, Coptic, and Armenian) have the same belief in the Eucharist as Catholics. Historically, the view of communion being only spiritual didn't exist until about 500 years ago.

(See also MT 26:26-28, LK 22:17-20, LK 24:30-35)

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What does the Catholic Church believe about:

Praying to the Saints?

Veneration (of Saints): Showing devotion and respect to Mary, the Apostles, and the martyrs, who were viewed as faithful witnesses to faith in Jesus Christ. Later, veneration was given to those who led a life of prayer and self-denial in giving witness to Christ, whose virtues were recognized and publicly proclaimed in their canonization as saints. Such veneration is often extended to the relics or remains of those recognized as

saints; indeed, to many sacred objects and images. Veneration must be clearly distinguished from adoration and worship, which are due to God alone. (CCC Glossary)

VENERATE: to regard with reverential respect. (c)2000 Zane Publishing, Inc. and Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. All rights reserved.

- ❖ **Catholics ask the Saints in Heaven to pray to Jesus for us**, just as I would ask any Christian still on earth to do. For Jesus taught us that He is the God of the living, not the dead (MK 12:26), we see that the saints and angels in Heaven are aware of what happens on earth (Heb. 12:1, MT 22:30, LK 15:10, 1 Cor. 4:9) and we see angels and saints in Heaven sending up prayers to God (Rev. 5:8 & 8:3). We ask those who have finished the race and stand purified before God to pray to Jesus for us.
- ❖ **The definition of ‘pray’ shows the different meanings it has in English.** In Greek the two are more clearly separated and there is not a chance of misunderstanding: Latria (worship) and *dulia* (respect). We give Latria only to God.

PRAY 1 : entreat, implore 2 : to ask earnestly for something 3 : to address God with supplication
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- ❖ **We respect and use the relics of Saints just as they did in the Scriptures.** We see Elijah’s mantle part the Jordan (2 Kings 2:11), the bones of Elisha raise the dead (2 Kings 13:20), a hemorrhage cured by touching Jesus’ garment (MT 9:20-22), Peter’s shadow (Acts 5:15), and Paul’s apron, healing the sick (Acts 19:11). *Catholics believe that God works His power using physical as well as spiritual things.*

What Catholics Do Not Believe About the Saints:

- ❖ **Catholics do not put Saints above God.** When we venerate the Saints we celebrate God’s creations, just as we can celebrate a beautiful sunset or mountain range. We do not degrade or ignore God in this, but give Him the true praise. We hold up the Saints as models and point to what God has done through them. We celebrate how they responded to Jesus’ grace in their lives.
- ❖ **Catholics don’t try to communicate with the dead, that would be divination and is forbidden:**
CCC Para. 2116 All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone.

Scriptural Evidence

Prayers for the Dead

Tobit 12:12 2 Maccabees 12:39-45, 1 Corinthians 15:29, 2 Timothy 1:16-18 (Assumption is that Onesiphorus is dead.)

Dead Saints Are Aware of Earthly Affairs

Matthew 22:30, Luke 15:10, 1 Corinthians 4:9, Hebrews 12:1

Dead Saints Intercede For Those On Earth

Jeremiah 15:1, 2 Maccabees 15:14, Revelation 6:9-10

Saints Are Intermediaries and Present Our Prayers to God

Revelation 5:8

Dead Saints Appear On Earth to Interact With Men

1 Samuel 28:12-15 with Ecclesiastics 46:20, 2 Maccabees 15:13-16, Matthew 17:1-3, 27:50-53, Revelation 11:3

Guardian Angels

Psalm 34:7 and 91:11, Matthew 18:10, Acts 12:15, Hebrews 1:14

Angels Are Aware of Our Thoughts

Luke 15:10, 1 Corinthians 4:9

Angels Participate in the Giving of God's Grace

Revelation 1:4

Angels Are Intermediaries and Present Our Prayers to God

Tobit 12:12,15 Revelation 5:8, 8:3-4

What does the Catholic Church believe about: Mary

- ***The Catholic Church sees Mary as Jesus sees her.*** We are the adopted brethren of Jesus, so Mary is our adopted mother. Since Scripture commands us to honor our parents we do that. We

believe Mary is 'Full of Grace'(LK 1:28) and as Mary herself said, 'All generations shall call me blessed.' (LK 1:48). (See also CCC Para. 501)

- ***We refer to Mary as the 'Mother of God' because that's what she is.*** This doesn't mean she 'created' God, but that she gave birth to Jesus (Who is fully God and fully man). (See Luke 1:42 and CCC Para. 495)
- ***We believe that Mary was conceived without original sin,*** just as Adam and Eve were. This was a special gift from God to Mary so that sin would never touch Our Lord, even in the womb: CCC Para. 722 The Holy Spirit prepared Mary by his grace. It was fitting that the mother of him in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" should herself be "full of grace." She was, by sheer grace, conceived without sin as the most humble of creatures, the most capable of welcoming the inexpressible gift of the Almighty.

What Catholics Do Not Believe About Mary:

- ***We do not believe Mary is a God or in any way equal to God,*** but a fantastic human being that did God's will perfectly during her life. Where as Adam and Eve fell into sin, she did not. Here's the Catechism:

CCC Para. 970 "Mary's function as mother of men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. But the Blessed Virgin's salutary influence on men . . . flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it, and draws all its power from it. "No creature could ever be counted along with the Incarnate Word and redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by his ministers and the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is radiated in different ways among his creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source.

- ***Catholics do not only pay attention to Mary and so ignore Jesus.*** We ask Mary to pray to Jesus for us, just as I would ask you to do. If you go to a Catholic Mass you will see a service that is 80% Scripture (including 3 readings from the Old and New Testaments) and is totally geared to worshipping Jesus who is Our Lord and God. (CCC Para. 308)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death, Amen (From Luke 1:28-55)

What does the Catholic Church believe about Purgatory?

Purgatory: A state of final purification after death and before entrance into heaven for those who died in God's friendship, but were only imperfectly purified; a final cleansing of human imperfection before one is able to enter the joy of heaven. (CCC glossary)

- Purgatory comes from Latin and means '*cleansing or purifying*'
- **Part of Jesus' sanctification of us includes getting rid of any imperfections or attachment to sin we might still have after we die.** It is a place of healing so we can live in eternal happiness in Heaven. This is *part of* Jesus' death for us on the cross, not separate. Scripture tells us that nothing unclean shall enter Heaven (Rev. 21:27). You can also read Is. 6:5 to see what happens as we approach God's throne. So if we die without loving God perfectly then we must be cured of that before entering Heaven. Think of it as if Jesus pulls us out of a mud pit to save us from drowning, but He must then still clean off all the mud clinging to us and in addition stop our desire to get back into the mud. (See also MT 5:21, CCC Para. 1031-1032)
- **Also, if we die without repenting of minor (venial) sins we must also be cleansed of them before entering Heaven.** Some sins don't send us to Hell (1 John 5:17) and can be forgiven in the next life (MT 12:32). However, major (mortal) sins do separate us from God by our own choice, so if we die without repenting of them we go to Hell forever, not Purgatory (CCC Para. 1854-1864).
- Here's Scripture speaking of Purgatory, note that 'The Day' refers to our judgment, so this 'burned up' and suffering spoken of here can only occur *after death* and to saved souls (since they are saved):

'For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw-- each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.' 1 Cor. 3:11

- **This cleansing or purging can be done in this life (through penance and good works of charity) or it will be done in the next one for those already going to Heaven.** We believe saints and martyrs have finished that in this life and so after death go straight to Heaven.
(See CCC Para. 1472-1473)

What Catholics Do Not Believe About Purgatory:

- **Purgatory is *not* a 'second chance' at Heaven.** All who are in Hell are there permanently and all those in Purgatory are going to Heaven at some point. (CCC Para. 1031)
- **Purgatory is *not* a 'mini-hell', it is one entrance to Heaven** that many must go through. The souls in Purgatory do suffer (some medicine hurts us) but they are still joyful because they know they are Heaven bound. (CCC Para. 1030)