

Roman Catholicism

Religious Practices

- Required Daily Observances
- Required Weekly Observances
- Required Occasional Observances
- Holy Days of Obligation
- Praying the Rosary
- Stations of the Cross

Religious Items

Requirements for Membership

Medical Prohibitions

Dietary Standards

Burial Rituals

Sacred Writings

Organizational Structure

History

Theology

- Catholic
- Revelation
- The Trinity
- The Command to Love
- Gratitude and Thanksgiving
- Awareness of Sin
- Salvation
- Community
- The World
- Life After Death
- Prayer
- The Scriptures
- Sacramental Theology
 - ▶ Sacraments of Initiation
 - ▶ Sacraments of Healing
 - ▶ Sacraments of Commitment

- [Catholic Devotions](#)
 - ▶ [Devotions to Jesus Christ](#)
 - ▶ [Veneration of the Saints](#)
 - ▶ [Devotions to Mary](#)

[Reference Works](#)

[Appendix: Catholic Liturgical Year](#)

- [Introduction](#)
- [The Advent Season](#)
- [The Christmas Season](#)
- [Ordinary Time](#)
- [Lent](#)
- [Easter to Pentecost](#)
- [Ordinary Time](#)
- [Special Feast Days and Times of Celebration](#)
- [Liturgy of the Hours](#)

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Required Daily Observances. Generally, there are no specific requirements for daily religious practices. There is a general expectation of daily personal prayer and devotions, including morning and night prayer and grace before and after meals.

Security note: Priests, deacons, or members of religious communities of brothers and sisters may have a daily obligation to pray the Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours). Inmates who have this obligation should be assisted in acquiring an office book or breviary.

Required Weekly Observances. Catholics are obligated to participate in the Eucharist (Mass) each Sunday (see canon 897). Ordinarily, Sunday Mass is offered after 4:00 p. m. on Saturday or any time Sunday. Because of the scarcity of priests, it is sometimes necessary to offer the weekly Mass at another time during the week. The appropriate time, though, is during the hours cited above – Mass should only be offered at another time if no priest is available during the hours prescribed. In BOP institutions where there is a priest chaplain, Mass should be offered during prescribed hours on all Sundays and Holy days. If there is a satellite camp or jail unit, Mass should be offered there as well.

While it is preferable to provide the Mass in both Spanish and English, and certainly is

easier for most inmates to pray and worship in their native language, the Mass need only be offered in one language or bilingually.

Some have indicated a shortage of contract money as a reason for not accommodating weekly Mass. Where this may be the case, a bilingual Mass or Masses, available to all inmates each week, is better than rotating every other week between the camp and the main institution. In complexes where one priest has responsibility for celebrating Mass in several settings it may be necessary to celebrate some Masses outside the normal hours for the Sunday observance, **but Mass must be available to Catholic inmates on a weekly basis.**

Communion services offered by a deacon or commissioned extraordinary minister of Communion do not substitute for the weekly Mass obligation unless the prison is located in an area where no priests are available **at any time** during the week. If chaplains are having difficulty identifying priests for non-personal service contracts, please let the Regional Chaplaincy Administrator know; the administrator will try to help identify Catholic clergy in the area.

Media Mass is never an acceptable substitute for participation in the Mass. It may serve as a devotional experience for some, but it does not fulfill one's obligation to participate. As the number of Catholic chaplains decreases, it seems necessary to provide this clarification of the laws governing members of the Catholic Church.

Security note: Sunday Mass

- All Catholics are obligated to participate in Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of obligation.
- Ordinarily Mass is offered after 4 p.m. on Saturdays or any time on Sunday. Due to the scarcity of priests, it may be necessary to offer Mass during the week.
- The Mass need only be offered in one language; it may be offered bilingually.
- Communion services are not substitutes for the Mass obligation.
- Media Mass is not a substitute for participation in the Mass.
- A small amount of wine must be used in the Mass. Grape juice (mustom) may only be used with permission of the Ordinary of the Diocese.

Valid performance of the Eucharistic ritual requires the use of a small amount of wine. It need only be consumed by the priest. Although the practice of receiving communion under both species is common, church law does not require those receiving communion to receive the consecrated wine. It is sufficient to receive the communion host, for Christ is believed to be totally present in the consecrated host. The consecrated wine should

be consumed by the priest at Mass. Consecrated wine is never reserved in the tabernacle.

Wine is stored behind two locked doors (e.g., in a locked safe/filing cabinet/refrigerator within a locked office). An accurate record of its use must be maintained on **bin cards**. If a chaplain is not on duty or present during liturgies celebrated by a contractor or guest priest, a staff member should be informed in advance of the need for wine and have access to the necessary keys.

Wine may be purchased on a Government credit card.

Contract priests may not bring wine into the institution. The chaplain needs to make arrangements to provide the priest with wine purchased by the institution.

The sacred vessels used to celebrate Catholic Mass should not be used for other purposes or by other religious groups.

Once the communion hosts are consecrated, Catholics believe that Christ is truly present in those hosts. Hence they must be treated reverently and either completely consumed at the Mass or kept in a tabernacle with a vigil light burning nearby to recall the sacred presence. Under no circumstance should consecrated hosts be mixed with hosts that have not been used.

Required Occasional Observances

Baptism. The normal minister for the sacrament of baptism is the priest or deacon. Water is poured over the head of the one being baptized while the priest or deacon says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Those being baptized Catholic do not need to be immersed in water. The normal time for baptism is at the Easter Vigil Service on Holy Saturday night. A person should normally have completed his or her preparation through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. One who has been previously baptized in another Christian denomination does not need to be baptized again, but would normally make a profession of faith at the Easter Vigil Service. There is no rebaptism in the Catholic Church; those who are separated by sin or lapse are reunited with the faithful through the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Confirmation. One who is being baptized at the Easter Vigil Service on Holy Saturday may also be confirmed by the priest who baptized him or her. Otherwise, the bishop is the normal minister of confirmation. The chaplain may request the bishop to come to the institution for the Sacrament of Confirmation after inmates have been prepared.

Reconciliation (Confession). The Sacrament of Reconciliation may be celebrated communally in a penance service. Penance services should be scheduled at least seasonally. Normally, individual absolution is given to penitents, even in the context of a communal celebration of reconciliation. However, the local bishop may give permission for general absolution for those attending.

The sacrament of reconciliation celebrates and affirms God's forgiveness of the penitent. The sacrament, then, celebrates the reconciliation between God, the penitent, and the community that has already occurred. Participation in the sacrament, and the act of absolution by the priest, is an outward sign of the graces of repentance and forgiveness.

Anointing of the Sick See section on "Burial Rites."

Holy Days of Obligation

- Christmas, December 25.
- Solemnity of Mary, January 1.
- Ascension Thursday, Thursday of the 6th week of Easter.
- Assumption of Mary, August 15.
- All Saints, November 1.
- Immaculate Conception, December 8.
- In Puerto Rico only, the feast of Epiphany is also observed as a holy day of obligation.

Participation in the Eucharist is required on all holy days of obligation; work is prohibited.

Praying the Rosary. The praying of the rosary is a very popular daily devotion in honor of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Many Christians who are not Catholic, and even some Catholics, believe that those who pray the rosary are praying *to Mary*. The prayers are offered to God alone, through the intercession of Mary, His mother.

The rosary is a biblical meditation on the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries in the life of the Holy Family. It is true that the praying of the rosary includes the repetition of Hail Marys, Our Fathers, and Glory Be to the Father.... However, the essence of the prayer is not the repetition of memorized prayers, but in biblical reflection on the events of Jesus' life, which occurs during the recitation of the prayers.

Stations of the Cross. Praying the Stations of the Cross is a private or public biblical devotion focusing on the suffering and death of Jesus. When praying the stations, those participating in the prayer view 14 crosses, each serving as a reminder of an event in

Jesus' suffering and death. Using the scriptures, a written text, and their own imagination, those praying the stations remember the suffering and death of Jesus and make prayers of forgiveness and thanksgiving to God for the gift of Jesus' death and the Resurrection.

RELIGIOUS ITEMS

Personal Religious Items

- Bible.
- Prayer books.
- Rosary, plastic.
- Crucifix.
- Religious medallion and chain.
- Holy cards and icons.
- Scapular (brown and green).
- Blessed palms.
- Small container of holy water.

Security note: Only plastic rosaries are permitted in the institutions.

Security note: The brown scapular, worn against the skin, is a symbolic undergarment worn over both shoulders and covering both the chest and the back. It should not be confused with a medallion. Upon request, inmates may be permitted to wear the scapular. It has little or no monetary value.

Congregate Religious Items. Three main pieces of furniture must be provided for Mass and other Catholic rituals.

- **Altar** represents Christ and his sacrificial meal. It often contains a sacred altar stone, reserving its use for rituals.
- **Pulpit** represent God's word proclaimed to the people.
- **Chair** represents the authority of the presider who gathers the people together in unity of worship.

Common Catholic Religious Items:

- Communion hosts or bread.

- Wine.
- Chalice.
- Ciborium.
- Roman Missal (Sacramentary).
- Lectionary.
- Candles.
- Cruets.
- Altar linens.
- Corporal.
- Processional crucifix.
- Ashes and palms for seasonal observances.
- Tabernacle.
- Liturgical vestments (including albs, chasubles, stoles, and dalmatics).
- Musical instruments for accompaniment.
- Missalettes and hymnals (see official Catholic reference books).

Other common Catholic items, which should be available in all Chapels, are:

- Holy water font.
- Bells.
- Religious paintings or statues.
- Banners.
- Stations of the cross.
- Monstrance.
- Pix.
- Aspergillum.
- Thurible and incense.
- Easter candle and stand.
- Holy water bottle.
- Holy oil stock.

Ritual books should be provided for the Catholic minister – for baptisms, communion services, marriages, anointing of the sick, and funerals.

Security note: The Zimmer Amendment, passed annually by Congress, may affect the purchase and use of electronic musical equipment and videotapes/DVD's. Please consult the Regional Chaplaincy Administrator for an up-to-date interpretation of the amendment.

Searches. While Roman Catholic inmates may place great value in the Bible and other religious items (even articles that have not been formally blessed), these can be handled by other people. Staff are expected to show the same respect for such items as for religious articles belonging to all traditions. Religious articles are not to be mishandled, thrown, placed on the floor, or brought into the bathroom and placed on the toilet or basin.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Requirements. A person becomes a member of the Catholic Church, is united to Christ, and shares in the life of God as Trinity, through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Full membership includes participation in these three sacraments.

The preparation for entering the church may be lengthy, often nine months to two years. A person usually prepares to enter the church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). For one to be baptized, confirmed, and to receive Eucharist, that person must understand and believe the basics of being a follower of Christ in the Catholic Church. This is normally determined by an interview with a priest or deacon, Catholic chaplain, or other designated representative after completing the preparation process.

Persons who have been baptized into another Christian church are often received into the Catholic Church by a profession of faith, since their baptism into Christianity has already occurred.

The normal time for entering the Catholic Church is at the Easter Vigil liturgy on Holy Saturday evening, the night before Easter Sunday. A priest or deacon is the normal minister of the sacraments of baptism.

The Catholic Church does not require immersion for baptism, but only the pouring of water over the head of the person. The essential words for baptism are “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

While Baptism into the Catholic community is allowed in prisons, chaplains and catechists should always enter into RCIA with the assurance that the individual being prepared for baptism has the support of a local parish community at the release destination or within the prison faith community. Detailed rules and regulations about entering the church may be found in the **Code of Canon Law** and in **The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults**.

Total Membership. In 2005 there were more than a billion Roman Catholics worldwide,

and about 68 million in the U.S.

MEDICAL PROHIBITIONS

Because Catholics believe that all people are created in the image of God and are temples or dwelling places of God's Holy Spirit, their life is deemed sacred. Catholics are forbidden from participating in or facilitating abortions or the unjust taking of human life. Otherwise, there are no medical prohibitions.

DIETARY STANDARDS

Lent. During Fridays of Lent Catholics are expected to **abstain** from meat. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics are asked to abstain from meat and also **fast**. Minimum fasting is to eat no more than one full meal on a fast day. Two smaller meatless meals, amounting to less than a full meal, are permitted to sustain physical strength. These norms apply to persons over 14 years old until age 60. With the availability of the no-flesh option on mainline, Catholic inmates are able to meet dietary needs through self-selection.

Religious Diets and Catholic Inmates. Catholic inmates ordinarily do not need to be on the certified food religious diet. There is no religious requirement for a special diet. They may participate in the self-serve religious diet for personal reasons if they desire. Catholic inmates should be counseled on the importance of self-discipline in their diet and choosing to eat in a healthy manner that is pleasing to God. People honor and glorify God and purify their bodies by the discipline of choosing to eat correctly. When an inmate requests to be placed on a religious diet, the chaplain may use that time to help guide the inmate about what constitutes a healthy diet.

BURIAL RITUALS

When an inmate is dying, the Catholic priest should be called for the Anointing of the Sick, if this sacrament has not already been given. The dying person, if able, should also receive Viaticum (Holy Communion). Only the Catholic priest may administer the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. The priest is also the normal minister of Viaticum. If the priest is not available, a deacon, Catholic chaplain, or other designated extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may give Viaticum.

When a Catholic person has died, the Catholic chaplain/contractor should be called to pray for the dead person. One who is already dead should **not** be given Anointing of the Sick. In the absence of a priest after the death, any Christian, preferably a Catholic, may pray at the bedside and perform a sacred ritual returning the baptized to God, from

whence he or she came.

The chaplain, following the death of a person, should be available to help in any way possible – ministering to staff or inmates, or trying to contact the family. The chaplain should work closely with the executive staff in the notification process.

Celebrating a memorial mass or other memorial service for the deceased inmate helps others to better process the death of the person. The memorial service should be as early as the next day.

Wherever possible, a Catholic inmate should be buried in a Catholic cemetery. If this is not possible, the individual grave should be blessed. Cremation is permissible as long as it is not used as a symbol denying the resurrection of the body.

SACRED WRITINGS

The Bible is the fundamental sacred text for Catholics. The **New American Bible** is generally considered the standard Bible in English. The **New Jerusalem Bible** is also excellent, with abundant cross-references. **La Biblia Latinoamericano** is an excellent Spanish-language Bible. Other reliable translations of the Bible (RSV, etc.) are acceptable, but their reliability may have to be taught to some Catholics who have been instructed otherwise.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The basic unit of the Catholic Church is the diocese. More important dioceses are called archdioceses. Each diocese is headed by a bishop or an archbishop. Assisting the bishop are other clerics, called priests and deacons, who are directly responsible to the bishop. A priest may be appointed pastor of a parish within the diocese.

Bishops in a large geographic region form episcopal conferences. Issues affecting the Church in that region are studied and addressed by its bishops. In the U.S., bishops have formed into the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB).

The pope is elected for life by the College of Cardinals. Cardinals are still bishops. The pope is assisted in governing the church by consulting with the bishops of the world, usually in meetings called synods. The routine governing of the Church occurs in Vatican City, the papal city-state within Rome, by the Roman Curia. The Vatican is represented in many countries by a papal nuncio or apostolic delegate.

Some Catholics live in community or belong to Religious Orders such as the

Franciscans, Jesuits, Carmelites, and Dominicans. They take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Members of Religious Orders include sisters (nuns), brothers, and priests. Most priests, however, are ordained for ministry in a diocese under a bishop. They are called diocesan or secular priests.

Headquarters Location. The world headquarters is in Vatican City, Rome, Italy, and the U.S. headquarters is in Washington, D.C. at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Each diocese has its own headquarters.

Contact Office/Person. Each BOP institution is located within the boundaries of a Catholic parish, which is within a diocese. It may be helpful to contact the pastor of the local parish or the local diocesan offices. Sacraments of Initiation and Marriage should be recorded in the Catholic parish.

The Official Catholic Directory is published each year by J.P. Kennedy and Sons. It contains addresses and phone numbers of dioceses, institutions, and priests.

HISTORY

Roman Catholicism is a living Christian tradition, community, and way of life based on the example and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, and the belief and experience of Jesus' death on a cross and his resurrection.

Roman Catholicism is the Western Rite of Catholicism, as distinct from Eastern Rite Catholicism. It is also called the Roman Rite or Latin Rite. It is the largest ritual church of the Catholic churches, Eastern or Western.

The word Christian means “Christ-like” or one who follows Christ – Jesus of Nazareth – who is believed by Christians to be the Christ or Messiah. Early Christians were Jewish. They accepted Jesus as the long-awaited Jewish Messiah and followed his teaching.

Jesus was born Jewish in 4 B.C.E. in Judea. He started preaching about the Kingdom of God when he was 30. He was executed on a cross under the orders of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, around the year 30 C.E. After his death, followers believed they experienced him alive in a new and wonderful way. Christians refer to this as the Resurrection of Christ. Motivated by this awareness, his disciples took to heart his message and went about preaching the Kingdom of God.

About 40 years after his death, these followers were expelled from the Jewish community as an heretical sect. This event also happened around the time of the Roman destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The early Christians experienced much persecution from the Roman Empire until Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity. From the early 4th century, Christians were no longer subject to Roman persecution. Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire under Emperor Theodosius I.

The teachings and recollections of the life of Jesus were eventually written down. By the end of the 4th century, 27 books of the New Testament were recognized by Church councils. Combined with the Jewish scriptures (Torah or Law, Prophets, and Writings) these books became what today is called the Bible. The Council of Trent (1545-63) officially recognized the books of the Bible used by the Catholic Church.

Catholics believe that Jesus commissioned Peter to be first among the apostles, chief shepherd, and foundation rock upon which Christ would build his church. Peter, they believe, was the first bishop of Rome. He died in Rome around the year 64 C.E. during the persecutions of Emperor Nero and is believed to be buried in a crypt below the altar of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Catholics believe that the authority given to Peter by Jesus was handed on to Peter's successors – the bishops of Rome, or popes. The successors of the apostles (the bishops and the pope) authentically interpret and apply the teachings of Jesus in every age and culture under the guidance of his Holy Spirit. Catholics recognize the bishop of Rome, the pope, as the “perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity of the bishops and of the multitude of the faithful” (Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium*, 23).

The term *catholic*, describing the early Christian Church, was first used by Ignatius of Antioch in an epistle to the Smyrneans around the year 107 C.E. The early Christian communities were centered in the major cities of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. The Church that expanded from Rome became known as the Western or Latin Rite Church; the others became known as Eastern Rite Churches.

By the 11th Century, the Church of the West and the Church of the East had grown apart, differing in matters of theology, ritual, and authority. In the 16th century another split within the Western (Roman, Latin) Rite Church occurred, called the Reformation. A movement protesting abuses in the Catholic Church resulted in separation from the church of people who came to be known as Protestants. The Council of Trent brought reform to the Catholic Church in the 16th century, but the separation of Protestants and Catholics still exists.

Under the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors of the 16th and 17th centuries, the Catholic Church came to Mexico and South America. In the midst of conquest and disease brought from Europe by the invaders, the Church set about trying to convert

native peoples to Catholicism. Some noble efforts were made to bring the faith to the natives, such as the Jesuit reductions (communities) in northern Argentina. But with changing political situations, these movements failed. In Mexico in the early 16th century, the Blessed Mother appeared to a poor young man, Juan Diego, to bring hope to suffering and poor people. Our Lady of Guadalupe, dearly loved by the Mexican people, has been a powerful source bringing Mexicans to faith in Christ.

In modern times, Pope John XXIII called for a renewal of the Church to respond to the needs of the modern world. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) brought a dramatic rethinking of the theology and role of the church in the world. The directions carved out by Vatican II are still being realized in the life of the Church today. Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II after him committed to furthering the renewal begun by Vatican II. Catholics need to be aware and informed about the importance of this event in the Catholic Church. Some consider this council will rank with the councils of Nicaea (325), Chalcedon (451), and Trent (1545-63).

THEOLOGY

Catholic. *Catholic* means *universal*. Catholicism is characterized by an openness to all truth and every good value. It is open to all human, religious, and Christian experience. It is not limited to any culture, national or ethnic group, school of theology, or spirituality. Catholic is a way of being Christian characterized by a both/and rather than an either/or approach; nature *and* grace, faith *and* reason, scripture *and* tradition, faith *and* works, authority *and* freedom, unity *and* diversity, laws *and* dispensation, rules *and* exceptions, respect for authority *and* respect for freedom of conscience, high ideals *but* minimum requirements, censures/excommunications *but* absolution and forgiveness. Jesus is human *and* divine. God is Trinity, both three and one.

Revelation. In the contemporary world, people tend to think that only science and reason can bring true knowledge. If something cannot be proved scientifically or by reason it isn't true. Catholics believe that there is another vital source of knowledge and wisdom – *God's own revelation* to humanity. Catholics believe that God has revealed himself to humanity, has instructed humans how to live in relationship to one another, and has revealed humanity's final destiny. For Catholics, human knowledge must be guided by God's revelation. Truth is one. Science, reason, and revelation should each contribute to the one truth.

Throughout history God has gradually revealed himself and the purpose of human existence. Peoples throughout history have known something about God. But especially through the people of Israel, the Jewish people, from the time of Abraham until the death

and resurrection of Jesus, God has most perfectly revealed himself.

Catholics believe that God's revelation is now complete. Jesus is the final and perfect revelation of God in human form. To know Jesus is to know God and God's will for humanity. God has completely revealed himself and all that needs to be revealed. After Jesus, there is no new revelation. But God continues to reveal what has already been revealed and leads the church into a deeper understanding of what was revealed. Catholics believe that God's completed revelation still needs to be more profoundly understood and applied in every age and culture.

For Catholics, God's complete revelation expressed in the personal life and teaching of Jesus was entrusted to the apostles to be preserved and shared. This responsibility was then passed by the apostles to their successors, the bishops and pope of the church. The responsibility of preserving and authentically interpreting, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the revelation God has given in Christ now belongs to the pope and bishops. Bishops, when teaching in union with each other and the pope, are seen as authentically interpreting the revelation given to the church by Christ.

Even though the pope and bishops have the responsibility of authentically interpreting the revelation of God, Catholics believe that God is also personally present to every person, revealing to them tender love and mercy, and guiding them with the Holy Spirit. Catholic spirituality involves awareness and response to God's personal revealing presence in the lives of individuals and communities.

The Trinity. The central revelation of God, Catholics believe, is God's revelation as Trinity, affirmed by the Council of Nicea in 325. Catholics believe that God has revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three distinct persons but only one substance, one God. God is Father who creates and gives life, who protects and sustains life by unbounded love. God is Father of unlimited creativity who creates the cosmos down to the tiniest particle of an atom, who allows human beings to use their freedom in such a way as to participate in God's creation. God is Father who is just but merciful. God is Father of Jesus Christ. Jesus, Catholics believe, is the image or perfect revelation of God in human form. He is the human expression or Word of God made flesh. God's perfect love for humanity is shown in Jesus dying on the cross, revealing that God's love is so great that God is even willing to die for the world. God's utter faithfulness to humanity is revealed in Jesus being resurrected from death. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit teaches, guides, unites, and brings love, peace, and harmony. The Holy Spirit reminds people of all God has revealed.

The Command to Love. Catholics believe that God has revealed to humanity how to live in relationship to one another: they are to love one another as God loves them. They

are to love their neighbor as they love themselves. They are to pour out their energies and abilities in advancing the good of others, even in sacrificial love. This involves tremendous respect for the dignity of every human life, from the unborn to the elderly. It involves opposition to everything that diminishes or destroys human life and even the natural environment. Catholics believe that God can be experienced in the rejected, the imprisoned, the poor, the sick, and the weak of society. To care for these people is also to show love for God.

Gratitude and Thanksgiving. Catholics believe they can become aware of and enjoy life's blessings given by God every day, even in the midst of difficulty and suffering. They are encouraged to develop a habit of gratitude, thanksgiving, and praise for all that life brings them. They are encouraged to trust that God's love for them never dies, and that God will always be faithful to them.

Awareness of Sin. Catholics know they often fail to measure up to the vision God has for them. They know they can be sinful, abusive or even violent, selfish, lazy, resentful, addicted. They are aware they need to be committed to growth and reform. They know they constantly need strength, mercy, conversion, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. Knowing that difficulties can strengthen them, they realize virtue rests somewhere between their own striving toward holiness and God's faithful and merciful love.

Salvation. For Catholics, their purpose in life is not to earn salvation, but to live as people who know they are saved. Catholics do not believe that their works win them salvation. Instead, Catholics trust and have faith they have already been and are being saved by God in community (through baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist) for the blessedness of eternal life. Catholics believe salvation is a free gift of God that cannot be earned but can be refused. Because they are grateful for being saved for eternal life, they see themselves called to live with great generosity, love, and trust in God. They try to show their faith by their generous works.

Community. Catholics believe God's ongoing revelation and saving love for them can best be experienced in community, especially within the community of the church. For this reason, Catholics come to church services such as the Mass, and work together on community projects such as the education of the young and old. Not to participate in the community of the church and in its sacred functions or sacraments is to cut themselves off in some way from the experience of God's saving love.

The World. For Catholics, the world is good and beautiful. All that God has created is good. Life is a gift that should be enjoyed fully, but not at the expense of causing harm to others. The world should be protected and preserved. The dignity of people is to be

respected. People are not to be used as objects by others for personal gain.

Life after Death. Catholics believe that there is life after death. They know this cannot be proven or denied by science and reason, but they believe God has revealed this to them as true. Catholics believe that the resurrection of Jesus is God's confirmation that there is life beyond the grave. Catholics believe that they experience the love, assistance, and strength of those who have died and live in that new creation called heaven. They believe they experience the love of the saints, of Mary the mother of Jesus, and of the angels. Encouraged by God's promise of eternal life, Catholics are motivated by gratitude to generously give themselves for the good of humanity in this world. They believe that after death in heaven they will continue to experience love and be able to show love toward humanity.

Prayer. The prayer of the Mass is seen as the action of Christ himself in which Christ offers himself to the Father and gives himself as spiritual food to the faithful united with him in his offering. The "Our Father" ("Lord's Prayer") is the basic prayer taught by Jesus. These prayers have profound meaning and should be the frequent focus of reflection. In the Church there is a wide tradition of forms of prayer – from recited, repeated, and sung prayer, to liturgical prayer, dance, and contemplation. Through prayer one is strengthened in his or her life's journey.

The Scriptures. Catholics believe the books of the Bible contain the written formulation of God's revelation, inspired by the Holy Spirit. God's ongoing self-revelation, while not limited to written words, is accurately, but not literally, conveyed in the words of the Bible. Catholics are encouraged to read and meditate on the scriptures so they will be better able to understand God's revelation and to recognize God's revelation in the world. To understand what the scripture author intended to reveal about God, Catholics are encouraged to study why and how the various books of the Bible were written.

Over the years and centuries, individual Christians and the entire church have prayed and meditated on the written word of God to understand God's revelation and to apply it to their individual lives and historical times. Bishops, popes, scholars, peasants, and saints have pondered the message of Jesus to understand it more deeply. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a deeper and more complete understanding of God's revelation has developed, which has become part of the guiding tradition of the church.

Sacramental Theology. A major characteristic of Catholicism is sacramentality. In the Catholic vision, God can be recognized in all reality: persons, communities, movements, events, places, objects, the world at large, the cosmos. It is in and through material realities (but not only there) that one encounters the invisible and spiritual God. Catholics believe that God works through material realities to bring salvation. They

believe that people are temples of the Holy Spirit. They believe that the world is essentially good, even though fallen.

Catholics believe that the church participates in the work of Christ through sacraments (especially the Eucharist), the service ministry of all Christians, intercession of saints, and the use of sacred objects and rituals.

Sacraments are seen as sacred realities, moments, and vocations in life that make present God's saving love. The sacraments of the Church, Catholics believe, are determined by Christ. There are seven official Sacraments in the church:

Sacraments of Initiation. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are the three sacraments initiating one into the Church.

Baptism. Through baptism one "dies" to the old life of sin and selfishness and "rises" as a "new person in Christ." Through Christ (seen as one with the church) the baptized enters into the life of God as Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The person becomes a member of the church, and commits him- or herself to following Christ.

Confirmation is the sealing and strengthening of the individual by the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission of Jesus in the world.

Eucharist, the central and most important sacrament for Catholics, is the ritual meal in which Catholics gather with each other in Christ's presence, before God the Father, in thankful communion with Christ and one another, to hear God's word, and to recommit themselves in sacrificial love to extending Christ and the reign of God into the world. It commemorates Christ's own final Passover supper before he offered himself to God for the salvation of the world.

Sacraments of Healing. Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick renew the individual and the community.

Reconciliation is the sacrament of experiencing God's forgiveness in Christ, and committing oneself to reconciliation with God, others, and oneself. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, an opportunity for forgiveness of sin, is among the most sacred rites and rights of Catholics. Inmates making a request for sacramental confession should be accommodated as soon as possible, even if a contractor or volunteer has to be called into the institution. Inmates may be asked if they are able to wait for a regularly scheduled priest to assist them, but they should not be forced to wait for an extended period. Only a Catholic priest with faculties from the bishop of the diocese may administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The rite of reconciliation is especially

significant at a time of illness or impending death. The seal of confession demands absolute confidentiality, prohibiting the confessor from disclosing any information regarding the confession. Under no circumstances may institution security interfere with the seal of confession; i.e., audio- or videotaping, requiring the use of a telephone for confession, conducting an investigation, or requiring the presence of a third party.

Security note: Sacrament of Reconciliation

- Accommodation for sacramental confession for a requesting inmate should be made as quickly as possible.
- Only a Catholic priest with faculties may administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Institution staff may not interfere with the seal of Sacramental Confession – it demands absolute confidentiality.

Anointing of the Sick is the sacrament of receiving Christ's healing love and strength when one is seriously ill or in danger of death (see section on Burial Rites).

Sacraments of Commitment. Marriage and Holy Orders are seen as two vocations of life that manifest Christ to the church. There are other Christian vocations that manifest Christ but are not official sacraments in the church – for example, religious (vowed) life.

Marriage is the sacramental way of life or vocation in which a couple participates in God's creative and faithful love for each other and their children. Canon law of the Catholic Church (canon 1055.1) defines marriage: "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a consortium of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered to the good of the spouses and to the procreation and education of offspring: this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."

Marriage is a powerful and beautiful way to experience both God's tender and faithful love for each partner and to experience sacrificial, life-giving love. In marriage the couple extends Christ's love to each other and to their children. The purpose of marriage is provide mutual love and strength for the husband and wife, and to create and raise families as small communities formed in God's love. Hence, Catholics believe God's plan is for marriages to be a permanent, lifetime commitment, "until death do us part."

For a Catholic to enter into a marriage that is recognized as a true (sacramental) marriage by the Catholic Church, that marriage must involve a couple that is mature, free, and capable of entering marriage, and be celebrated in the presence of a recognized church official – a bishop, priest, or deacon. Before a Catholic couple can

marry in the presence of a recognized Catholic official, they must be free to marry (i.e., are mature, have not been married before, or if they have been, can prove they have received a marriage annulment). The couple typically attends marriage preparation classes, and if all works out, the actual marriage is scheduled and celebrated.

Since an inmate is not able to fulfill the requirements of marriage as understood in the Catholic Church, no requirement exists to assist the inmate in celebrating a *Catholic wedding recognized by the church*. The inmate still has the right to celebrate a civil marriage recognized by the state, in accord with Bureau policy.

However, the church recognizes that not every couple who celebrates a wedding ceremony may have the maturity and ability to enter into a sacramental, lifetime marriage. When they marry, they may hope and desire that their relationship will last a lifetime. But one or both spouses may not have the necessary qualities and maturity to enter into permanent marriage, as God intended. Such marriages often fail. Sometimes marriages fail for other reasons, too. A couple may grow selfish and forget that they are committed to the true good of their spouse and children.

Marriage annulment. When a marriage involving a Catholic fails, but before the Catholic is permitted to celebrate his or her marriage again in the church, the church will attempt to review what went wrong in that marriage. This review is called an annulment process. The church will conduct a special investigation of the failed marriage in an attempt to determine why it failed. The couple will be interviewed, if possible. Other family and friends may be interviewed. From the investigation, the church will make a ruling whether the couple at the time of their marriage had sufficient qualities and maturity to enter into a lifetime commitment. If the church decides that one or both people lacked these qualities, the church will declare that marriage to be “null,” or void. The church is basically saying that since there was not sufficient maturity on the part of the couple to enter a lifelong marriage, there never truly was a marriage as the church understands it – a sacramental marriage. Hence, that failed relationship is simply that, a failed relationship, not a marriage, even if children were born. If the church determines there was no true marriage from the start, then those people are free at some point to marry someone else, even with the church’s blessing.

The annulment process can be initiated by either party in the failed marriage. They simply contact the Catholic Church diocesan offices in their area. They will then be guided through the process, which can often take up to a year.

Holy Orders or Priesthood is the sacrament of making Christ present to the community, especially through preaching the Gospel, celebrating the Eucharist, helping people grow in holiness, and providing ordering or governing in the Church community.

Catholic Devotions

Devotions to Jesus Christ. Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is a venerable and traditional form of prayer for Catholics. Catholics believe that Jesus Christ is fully present in the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist (Mass). Often this consecrated bread (host) is reserved in a tabernacle, located where Catholics may quietly pray. A candle or electric vigil light is always lighted near the tabernacle to indicate the presence of Christ in the communion reserved in the tabernacle. In some places, for more solemn prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, the communion bread may be placed in a monstrance and displayed in the presence of the people praying. Scheduling “holy hours” for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament may be helpful for inmates. If a priest is not available to handle the Blessed Sacrament, this may be done by a deacon, vowed religious, or other commissioned minister of Holy Communion. The reserved communion in the tabernacle may be used for communion services and for bringing holy communion to sick inmates.

Catholics have other devotions to Christ. Devotions to the Sacred Heart and to Christ dying on the cross are ways for Catholics to meditate on Christ's self-emptying love for them individually, and for all people, and to help them realize they are to give themselves generously in love and concern for others.

Veneration of the Saints. According to the Council of Nicea in 787, the Christian respect for images is not contrary to the first commandment, which prohibits praying to idols. The veneration is not directed to the image but to the person represented therein. The honor paid to sacred images is a respectful veneration, not the adoration due to God alone. The Catholic teaching is not that *one prays to Mary and the saints*, but rather that *one prays to God through them*, just as a child seeking a gift from her mother may seek it through the intercession of her father or a sibling – one who has a close and deep relationship with the giver. Veneration, defined as reverential respect, must never be confused with adoration, which is defined as worship and honor to a deity or to the divine (God alone). This concept is often misunderstood by some Protestants, and even some Catholics.

From the most ancient times, Mary, Mother of Jesus, has been venerated and revered by Catholics as the “God-bearer.” This is the foundation of the special devotion directed toward her. *Catholics do not worship Mary* but recognize her as a human being who has been glorified by God because of her special role in the life of Jesus. It is important to understand that *Catholics do not pray to statues or paintings of Mary or other saints*. Their prayer is directed to God through the saints, who are already recognized for their closeness to God.

In light of these principles, it is important to remember:

- Veneration of Mary and the saints is ultimately devotion to Christ, whose grace has triumphed in them.
- Jesus Christ in his humanity and divinity alike is the one mediator between God and humankind.
- God's grace is mediated through visible, bodily realities, including fellow creatures who have shown themselves as striking examples of the transforming power of grace.

Devotions to Mary. There are many devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Catholics honor Mary, as they pray to God through her and other saints and family and friends who have died. But Mary holds a special place in Catholic spirituality since she is the human mother of Jesus.

The Rosary is perhaps the most common devotional prayer for Catholics. The practice of praying the rosary traces its origin to a time when monks prayed the psalms in community, but ordinary people did not have a practical way of praying. Strings of beads were created to count *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys*, which substituted for the psalms. These beads eventually became rosaries. It is common for Catholics to pray the rosary daily. A scheduled time for praying the rosary may be helpful for inmates.

REFERENCE WORKS

- Austin P. Flannery, ed., **Documents of Vatican II**, Costello Publishing, 1996.
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- _____, **Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches**, Canon Law Society of America, 1992.
- _____, **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, Our Sunday Visitor, 2000.
- _____, **Today's Missal**, Oregon Catholic Press.
- _____, **Living the Word**, World Library Publications, J.S. Paluch, Inc.
- _____, **The "Ordo," The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and the Celebration of the Eucharist**, Paulist Press.

Catholic religious items may be obtained at Catholic religious supply stores.

The Chapel library should include Catholic books in Spanish for Spanish-speaking inmates. The Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) Bookstore in San Antonio,

Texas, is a good resource for Spanish Catholic books.

Security note: Catholic videotapes/DVDs in English and Spanish should be available for inmates who have limited reading skills.

Many good reference works, Bible translations, and dictionaries are now found on CD-ROMs (cf. Paulist Press and Logos Press).

APPENDIX: CATHOLIC LITURGICAL YEAR

Introduction. The Catholic Church celebrates the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and its beliefs and traditions within the context of a Church Year, also known as the Liturgical Cycle. During the cycle, members of the Church relive the great events of salvation history.

This Liturgical Church Year, also called the Church's Year of Grace, begins with Advent, which usually starts in early December and continues through the evening prior to the next First Sunday of Advent. The last Sunday of the Church Year is the Feast of Christ the King, which occurs in late November.

Within the cycle are designated seasons, periods of celebration and commemoration. These include significant events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, and specified feast days that mark remembrances of saints.

The Advent Season. An essential element of Christian spirituality is watchfulness and waiting. Advent commemorates waiting for Christ in a threefold way: first, his coming in time, for which the people waited more than 4,000 years; second, his coming into the lives of each one daily; and third, his coming again in glory at a definite end time.

Advent has a character of joyful expectation, as a season to prepare for Christmas, when Christ first came among us. The Advent wreath, a popular symbol consisting of four candles set in a circle of greens, is recommended for use during Mass and communion services. A reconciliation service with individual confessions is generally held during Advent as a spiritual preparation for the Solemnity of the Nativity – the Christmas feast.

The Christmas Season. The Catholic Church holds sacred the event of Christ's birth and the early events of his life. The church celebrates the incarnation of God into humanity. The Christmas Season extends from Christmas Eve through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, observed in January.

A “midnight” Mass on Christmas Eve is traditionally scheduled between 8:00 p.m. and midnight, preceded by singing carols. A Mass on Christmas morning may also be celebrated in addition to, or in place of, the “midnight” Mass.

Generally, the Catholic Community waits until Christmas Eve to decorate the chapel or church. However, it is appropriate to arrange the creche/manger during Advent and to keep the infant Jesus figure in reserve until the Christmas “midnight” Mass.

The Feast of Mary, Mother of God, a holy day of obligation, is observed on January 1. Renewing spiritual resolutions and promises, as well as prayer for the perseverance in keeping these promises, is recommended.

The Sunday of the Epiphany of the Lord, celebrated on or near January 6, is also known as “Little Christmas.” This day commemorates the Kings’/Magi’s visit to Jesus. It is a time to recognize the gift of the good news of Jesus as Savior available to all people of the world.

The Christmas Season ends with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Ordinary Time. Ordinary Time marks the period from the Sunday after the Lord’s Baptism until the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. It resumes the Monday following Pentecost and continues through the evening prior to the First Sunday of Advent.

Lent. The 40-day season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending on Holy Saturday (Sundays are not included), is a sacred time of prayer, personal renewal, and penance. Catholics are expected to renew themselves during Lent by prayer, almsgiving, and fasting.

On Ash Wednesday Catholics are signed with a cross of ashes on their forehead to remind them of their mortality and their need for conversion and growth.

Catholics are required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Minimum fasting in the Catholic Church is understood as eating no more than one full meal each day. Catholics are required to abstain from meat on Fridays of Lent (this includes chicken and turkey, but not fish). They are also encouraged to discipline themselves through other forms of prayer, penance, and fasting. With the no-flesh option available on mainline, inmates are able to eat the required meatless meals on Fridays during Lent by self-selection.

Holy Week is a sacred time for Catholics to recall Christ's passion, death, and

resurrection. Holy Week begins with Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday), which recalls the triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem before his death. Palm branches should be ordered ahead of time for distribution at this celebration. The palms are kept throughout the year by Catholics as a reminder.

Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are known as the Triduum. Because of the importance of Holy Thursday to Catholics, the evening to celebrate the Last (Passover) Supper of Jesus, every effort should be made to find a priest to celebrate Mass on that evening. Holy Thursday Mass, or if need be, the communion service, generally incorporates the Washing of the Feet (*mandatum*).

Good Friday celebrates the death of Jesus. The Good Friday service is usually held in the afternoon. There is no Mass on this day. However, Holy Communion may be reserved for a Communion Service on this day.

Good Friday is a time when Christians of whatever denomination can come together for a common worship service commemorating the death of Jesus.

Easter to Pentecost. Holy Saturday night is known as the Easter Vigil. It is the primary celebration of Easter for Catholics. It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and also welcomes new members into the Catholic Church through baptism or a profession of faith. The celebration should take place after dusk. The blessing of the “New Fire” and “New Water” are important elements of the ritual. The Easter fire is blessed and the Easter candle is lit, recalling the Risen Christ, the Light of the World. The Easter Proclamation is sung and lengthy scriptures are read about God’s saving love. The Easter water is blessed to be used for baptisms. New members are welcomed into the church through baptism and professions of faith. All gathered renew their baptismal promises.

An Easter morning Mass or sunrise service is also appropriate. The Easter candle is lighted at all Masses celebrated from the Easter Vigil through Pentecost Sunday.

Catholics celebrate Easter, the resurrection of Jesus, during the 50 days following Easter Sunday. During this time the Easter candle is a continuous reminder that Christ is risen and is among his people.

Forty days after Easter, the church celebrates the Ascension of Our Lord. This is known as Ascension Thursday and is a holy day of obligation.

Finally, on Pentecost Sunday, the Easter season concludes while the church celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the church.

Ordinary Time. Ordinary Time resumes the Monday following Pentecost and continues through the Saturday before Advent. During this time, the following holy days of obligation occur: the Feast of the Assumption of Mary (August 15), All Saints Day (November 1), and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary (December 8). Catholic Mass should be scheduled on these days.

Special Feast Days and Times of Celebration. Some other special times of celebration for Catholics are:

- May devotions, seeking the intercession of the Blessed Mother, Mary, date back to the 16th century. Scheduling additional time for devotions such as the rosary, a May Crowning or procession, a prayer service, or reflection in honor of Mary is recommended.
- The Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, also known as Corpus Christi, occurs in June. It is customary to have a procession of the Blessed Sacrament on this day, or on an appropriate day near the feast.
- The commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, known as All Souls' Day, is celebrated on November 2. A Mass in memory of deceased loved ones may be celebrated.
- The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12 has particular significance for the Mexican people. A Mass celebrated in Spanish, or a prayer service with procession, is recommended.
- The Mexican custom of Posadas is celebrated for nine days before Christmas.

Liturgy of the Hours. From ancient times, the church has celebrated the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office); in this way it fulfills the Lord's precept of praying without ceasing. In this prayer, psalms are prayed and scriptures read, especially at Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Night Prayer. Through the Liturgy of the Hours, the church offers praise to God and intercedes for the salvation of the world.

Books are available that contain this structured prayer. For example, there is the two-volume set entitled **People's Companion to the Breviary**, from the Carmelite Monastery in Indianapolis, Indiana, or the **Shorter Christian Prayer**, from the Catholic Book Publishing Company in New York.