

**I want to learn more about my Catholic faith.**

**I want to do it by myself.**

**I don't want to go to class.**

**Where do I start?**



1. **You need to start reading.** You haven't read anything about your Catholic faith since you were a child. Reading articles from the internet helps, but you need to have a good read. And you need to choose articles on the internet carefully. Go to places like Barnes & Noble and Half Price Books. Ask/find books on the history of the early church. Nothing too scholarly. Just enough to get you interested.

- A good place to start is with the Loyola series. They offer short readable titles on Scripture, Church history, Mary, the Saints and more.
- Another great source from Loyola is their online series: "Catholic Basics" at [www.loyolapress.com/catholic-basics.htm](http://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-basics.htm).

2. **You need to start studying your Catechism.** If you contact Pam at the office, 512-892-2420, she will guide you to suitable reading material. I recommend some of the Middle School and High School catechetical books because they are written to be understood without too much brain. You are going to read this material as an adult person, not a fidgeting teenager. You will read this, take notes and you will retain it. The following are some great Catholic pages on the Web. Some I have checked out, others I have not. Check them out yourself and see what happens.

- "The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth" (Saint Mary's Press) is a very well written, easily understood version of the Catholic Catechism. We highly recommend it.

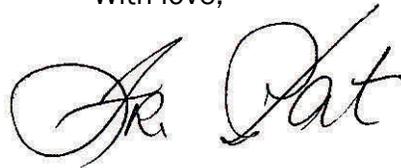
- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops also has the Adult Catechism available online: <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/uscca/u>
- [www.americancatholic.org](http://www.americancatholic.org)...Franciscan site. Type your search word into the search box and enjoy the read. Articles read like newspaper columns and are not too heavy theologically.
- [www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)...Huge Catholic site. Alphabetical index at the top of the page. An encyclopedia of Catholic knowledge.
- Check out [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com). This is a vast Catholic website run by one of the top Catholic publishers in the country. It's full of contemporary Catholic news, teaching, history, etc. Use this like a Catholic newspaper or a Catholic library. Something for everyone!
- [www.catholicfaithandreason.org](http://www.catholicfaithandreason.org)...takes itself very seriously.
- [www.catholicexchange.com](http://www.catholicexchange.com)...loads of articles to read with coffee.
- [www.catholic-pages.com](http://www.catholic-pages.com)...love this site. Great selection of everything Catholic.
- [www.catholic.com](http://www.catholic.com)...wonderful toolbar full of useful Catholic information and teaching.
- [www.catholic.net](http://www.catholic.net)...interesting articles, a good read.
- [www.aboutcatholics.com](http://www.aboutcatholics.com)...check out the toolbar for material.
- [www.patheos.com](http://www.patheos.com)...full of articles.

**3. You need to start reading the Bible properly.** By that I mean, you need to have a commentary with you when you read so that you begin to understand what you are reading. The first book of the Bible is not Genesis. When you did read the Bible you did it without meaning or context. Here are some suggestions:

- Wikipedia will give you a basic overview of the Book of the Bible you want to read. Many commentaries are not Catholic and they will have an anti-Catholic bias.
- If you focus on the readings for Sundays, to begin, I suggest trying [www.lectorprep.org](http://www.lectorprep.org). I love this site. Great notes.
- I also use [www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm](http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes.htm). These are Dr. Constable's Bible study notes. They are very detailed and he covers every book of the Bible.
- Check out [www.enduringword.com](http://www.enduringword.com). This website studies every book in the Bible. Concise and interesting. Not Catholic. I found a few anti-Catholic stones here.
- [www.jesuswalk.com](http://www.jesuswalk.com). I love this site. There are many Bible lessons here. I especially love his treatment of Luke's gospel.

- The USCCB website about the Bible, [www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm) has great introductions to each book of the Bible.
  - If you are interested in a more scholarly approach to the Bible, try <http://catholic-resources.org>.
4. **OK. You have sat alone at your desk for weeks and months now. When are you going to come to the Church community and participate properly?** You can't be a Christian/Catholic by yourself. You need community. You need to bring Christ to us.
- Start going to Mass regularly. Find the Mass you like. Find the priest you like. He is going to become your new BFF. You can also go to the Church at other times just to spend some quiet time at prayer. People love to go to the Day Chapel because it is so quiet. Nobody will disturb you.
  - It's time to get to know the priests. You have been saying good morning to Father for a long time now but you never go over to actually talk with him. You keep a wide berth. He notices that about you. Did you ever think about visiting him in the office? You could talk for a while. At some point it would be good for you to make your confession. You have to find a priest to talk to where you can get it all off your chest. If you have forgotten how to make your confession just tell Father and he will help you. You will feel better for doing this.
  - Start getting to know people by name. You have to make the effort. It doesn't happen by magic. Check out the bulletin for something you might be interested in. The thing about getting involved is that you actually have to show up. You can't be at home all the time and the rest of us are at the Church all the time. If we are going to have a relationship we have to be in the same room at some point.

With love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Pat". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "With love,".