

ings

[49] Mark 16:15-16

[50] Romans 10:9-15

[51] [Rituale Romanum](#) Rite for baptism of adults

[52] Catechism of the Catholic Church Glossary: Catechism

[53] http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/homilies/1993/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19930815_gmg-denver_en.html

[54] Saint Bede; The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers; Vol. 2

[55] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 86

[56] St Gregory the Great; The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers; Vol. 2

[57] St Gregory the Great; The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers; Vol. 2 [58] Mark 16:14

[59] Romans 12:11-13

Link to Liturgy



Feast Day Ascension of the Lord

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Lessons and Discussions

Page 5 – Ascension

Page 8 – Go and make disciples

“make disciples of all nations”

Page 11 – Receive the Power

“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me”

Page 14 – Call to Baptism

“Go and baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”

Page 19 – Send. Preach. Believe. Be Baptized.

“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved”

Entrance Antiphon – (Acts 1:11)

Should be chanted three times so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred. The chant leader could chant the first time and then all can join the second and third. Another song can be substituted, but should have the same theme; this should not be the norm.

Men of Galilee, why gaze in wonder at the heavens?
This Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven
Will return as you saw him go, alleluia.

Alternate options:

God of all Creation (Hillsong)
Here I am to Worship (Tim Hughes)
I will not Forget (Maranatha Music)
Lord I Lift your Name on High (Hillsong)
Holiness

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God, and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving, for the Ascension of Christ your Son is our exaltation, and, where the Head has gone before in glory, the Body is called to follow in hope. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – Matthew 28:16-20 – Roman Missal [Cycle A]

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
- Glory to you O Lord

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia!
R. Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia!

“The End” Notes

- [1] CCC 659
- [2] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 43
- [3] Luke 24:26
- [4] Acts 14:22
- [5] The church’s year pg. 292
- [6] Luke 24:51
- [7] Church’s Year pg. 292
- [8] Basic Catholic Catechism pg. 26
- [9] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 381
- [10] Basic Catholic Catechism pg. 26-27
- [11] <http://www.linktoliturgy.com/index.cfm?load=page&page=652>
- [12] Dan 7:14
- [13] Mt 6:21
- [14] Divine Intimacy pg. 536
- [15] John 3:2
- [16] Luke 10:1
- [17] Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 160
- [18] Luke 10:39
- [19] Luke 10:42
- [20] <http://www.linktoliturgy.com/index.cfm?load=page&page=774>
- [21] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [22] In Conversation with God 2, 86. 3
- [23] J. Escriva, Christ is passing by, 122
- [24] Matthew 16:19
- [25] Spiritual Reading in this Link to Liturgy packet
- [26] Fr. Robert J. Fox; *Reverence in Church*
- [27] Matthew 3:13-17
- [28] CCC 1214
- [29] CCC 1257
- [30] CCC 1258
- [31] CCC1259
- [32] CCC 1261
- [33] Basic Catholic Catechism Course pg. 84-85
- [34] Acts 16:15
- [35] Acts 16:33
- [36] I Cor. 1:16
- [37] The Essential Catholic Survival Guide pg. 145
- [38] The Essential Catholic Survival Guide pgs. 152-153
- [39] The Church’s Year pg. 318
- [40] Catechism of the Catholic Church; Glossary: Baptism
- [41] The Catholic Catechism pg. 506
- [42] The Church’s Year pg. 316
- [43] The Church’s Year pg. 315
- [44] CCC 1243
- [45] The Church’s Year pg. 319
- [46] The Church’s Year pg. 319
- [47] Rite of Marriage
- [48] Saint Gregory of Nyssa; Liturgy of the Hours; Fifth Week of Easter; Monday, Office of Read-

The wounds in His glorified body are an endless plea before the Father on our behalf.

The disciples leave Mt. Olivet and "return to Jerusalem with great joy."

Complete the decade with the Glory Be and the O My Jesus Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Marian Antiphon – Regina Caeli – Simple Tone

6.

lú-ia : Ora pro nó-bis Dé-um, alle-lú- ia.

V. Guade et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.

R. Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia

Let us pray. O God, who by the Resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, didst vouch safe to make glad the whole world; grant, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life. AMEN

English Translation

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia; For He whom thou didst merit to bear, alleluia, has risen as He said, alleluia: Pray fro us to God, alleluia.

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Gospel Reading – Mark 16:15-20 – Roman Missal [Cycle B]

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

- Glory to you O Lord

Jesus said to his disciples: proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, word through accompanying signs.

The Gospel of the Lord

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading

From Saint Augustine

Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with him. Listen to the words of the Apostle: If you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God; seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth. For just as he remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.

Christ is now exalted above the heavens, but he still suffers on earth all the pain that we, the members of his body, have to

bear. He showed this when he cried out from above: Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? and when he said: I was hungry and you gave me food.

Why do we on earth not strive to find rest with him in heaven even now, through the faith, hope and love that unites us to him? While in heaven he is also with us; and we while on earth are with him. He is here with us by his divinity, his power and his love. We cannot be in heaven, as he is on earth, by divinity, but in him, we can be there by love.

He did not leave heaven when he came down to us; nor did he withdraw from us when he went up again into heaven. The fact that he was in heaven even while he was on earth is borne out by his own statement: No one has ever ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.

These words are explained by our oneness with Christ, for he is our head and we are his body. No one ascended into heaven except Christ because we also are Christ: he is the Son of Man by his union with us, and we by our union with him are the sons of God. So the Apostle says: Just as the human body, which has many members, is a unity, because all the different members make one body, so is it also with Christ. He too has many members, but one body.

Out of compassion for us he descended from heaven, and although he ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in him by grace. Thus, no one but Christ descended and no one but Christ ascended; not because there is no distinction between the head and the body, but because the body as a unity cannot be separated from the head.

Responsory – Office of Readings (Acts 1:3, 9, 4)

During the forty days after his passion, he appeared to them and spoke with them about the kingdom of God.

– As they watched, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight, alleluia.

While he was with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the fulfillment of the Father's promise.

– As they watched, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight, alleluia.

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion 2nd Glorious Mystery – The Ascension of the Lord

Jesus reigned on Earth for forty days, confirming the authenticity of His resurrection from the dead. During this time, Christ employs His apostles with a mission of preaching the gospel to all the ends of the Earth. Jesus then, spreading his pierced hands over His people, ascends gloriously into Heaven. Although Christ's visible presence left the Earth, He did not leave His people as orphans. Rather, expressed that He would be with them in Spirit until the end of time. This mystery teaches us of the unfailing hope we are to have in Christ and His promise. No longer is our home merely the here and now, rather, we have an eternal home that awaits us in Heaven with Christ. The Spiritual Fruit of this decade of the Rosary is the theological virtue of Hope.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Say one "Our Father"

You may get 10 volunteers to read each of the following scriptures and then lead the first part of the Hail Mary.

Jesus remains on earth forty days after His Resurrection to prove He has truly risen from the dead.

He commissions the apostles to preach the gospel to every creature, and promises to be with them forever.

He will not leave them orphans, but will send the Holy Spirit to enlighten and strengthen them.

Jesus proceeds to Mt. Olivet accompanied by His Mother and the apostles and disciples.

Extending His pierced hands over all in a last blessing, He ascends into heaven.

As He ascends a cloud takes Him from their sight.

Jesus ascends to take His place at the right hand of the Father.

What jubilation there must be amid the angels of heaven at the triumphant entry of Jesus.

One must hear if the Gospel is going to be believed. One must be baptized if he believes.

Are people always going to believe right away? No. It was the disciples who at first did not believe when they were told. Remember on Easter day, Mary Magdalene had told the disciples and also the disciples on the road to Emmaus that Jesus had risen from the dead. They did not believe her when they were told of this. For this incredulity, Jesus rebuked them. “As the eleven were at table, he appeared to them and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw him after he had been raised.”[58] Jesus commissions those who at first did not believe, to go out to the whole world. If those who knew Jesus personally; walked with Him, saw His deeds, heard His words directly, and then heard of His resurrection but did not believe, we can be sure that many will not believe when first told about the Gospel. Acceptance of the Gospel might take time on the part of those receiving, and patience and charity on the part of those preaching the Gospel.

How can we help encourage others to believe? St. Paul tells the Romans, “Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.”[59]

Jesus commissioned the disciples and all the faithful to proclaim the Gospel to every creature. **Will every creature believe the Gospel as soon as it is preached? What impedes people from believing the Gospel in our modern age?**

What helps people believe in the Gospel in our modern age? Holiness. In every age it is the holiness of the Gospel lived out in prayer, believe and life. People believe and our baptized when they experience holiness in prayer and liturgy; when they hear holiness in the preaching of those who believe and when they see or witness the holiness within the life of those praying and preaching. Holiness is the key in every age. Many nations were evangelized by the holiness of priests and religious who through prayer, preaching and life lived out holiness. There is now a call for a re-evangelization that demands the holiness of all the faithful, priests, religious and laity. If we are going to evangelize or re-evangelize, we, the faithful must know that we are sent. Sent to be holy in prayer, preaching, and in the way we live our life.

The Ascension - Lesson and Discussion

The feast of the Ascension is typically celebrated forty days after Easter. We know Jesus ascended forty days after His death and resurrection based on today's first reading (Acts 1:1-11). This day usually falls on a Thursday; however, the Church can celebrate the solemnity of this Feast today, the seventh Sunday of Easter.

Christ's ascension into Heaven is a separate and beautiful event that we should and do celebrate in the Church. While at the Resurrection, Christ's body was glorified, His full glory “remains veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity.”[1] The full manifestation of his glory is shown to his Apostles at His ascension.

What did the ascension do? As we stated, forty days after Jesus resurrection He ascended to heaven body and soul. The Ascension means the final elevation of Christ's human nature into the condition of divine glory. It is the final work of redemption for Jesus. In accordance with the Church's common teaching, the souls of the just from the pre-Christian era went with our Lord into the glory of heaven. Jesus' Ascension is also the promise of our own ascension into Heaven one day.[2]

Where did Christ ascend into heaven? After forty days with His disciples, Jesus ascended into Heaven from the Mount of Olives; the same place where He had His agony in the Garden. Jesus shows this location for two reasons; First, this is where the beginning of His suffering and death. It is also the place where he accepted His cross to show us where we must endure our crosses. If we accept our crosses daily with patience and humility then we too will receive our ultimate reward in the end as He did. One of the first things Jesus taught the disciples on the road to Emmaus was the marriage between suffering and glory. On the road to Emmaus, He asked the disciples, “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”[3] This was a lesson the apostles and disciples of Christ would learn very quickly as they encountered persecution. Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas “...strengthen the spirits of the disciples and exhorted them to persevere in the faith, saying, ‘It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God.’”[4]

How did Christ ascend into heaven? Jesus Christ ascended

into heaven by His own power. He could do this because He is fully God. He is the King of the entire universe and now sits at the right hand of God the Father in glory fully God and fully man.[5]

Who saw Jesus ascend? The Apostles along with some of Jesus' disciples witnessed His ascension in Heaven.[6] The Apostles and disciples received great joy from His ascension. Saint Leo wrote concerning the ascension, "Rejoice, also, O Christian soul, for Christ has today opened heaven for you, and you may enter it, if you believe in Christ, and live in accordance with that faith." [7]

Why did Jesus ascend into Heaven? Jesus ascended into Heaven in order to fulfill His glory for all eternity. He ascended to be our Mediator and advocate with His Father (Hebrews 9:24), to open the gates of Heaven for all souls who died in God's grace, to prepare a place for us in Heaven (John 14:2), and to send the Holy Spirit as He promised (John 16:7).[8]

VIDEO – Shoppers go crazy on Black Friday - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 2:02

<http://youtu.be/2zBWjlkKDp>

One of the reasons Jesus ascended was to open the gates of Heaven for all souls who died in God's grace. What joy, there must have been for the souls who awaited the opening of heaven's gates. We often wait for grand openings of stores, amusement parks or concerts and have great joy and excitement when the doors are opened. Do we have the same excitement about the doors of heaven being opened for us? This great mystery of our faith, the second glorious mystery should bring about in us sentiments of joy and gratitude to the opening of the greatest gift of all, the beatific vision.

While the Apostles were filled with joy and awe at the sight of Jesus ascending into Heaven, they were also timid; distressed for they knew Jesus was leaving them again. But again Jesus reassures them, in today's first reading, of sending forth the Holy Spirit. He promises them an advocate and to bring them power through the Holy Spirit. They followed Jesus' instructions and waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit. This would happen nine days later at Pentecost. This would be the first novena in the Church.

What is a novena and why has it continued as a tradition of

completed in the Sacrament of Confirmation. A person cannot be un-baptized but it is possible to renounce the vows, to not renew them, and to refuse to live them out. The renouncement of vows or refusal to live out the vows of baptism is a refusal to reject Satan and embrace the Gospel and leads to condemnation.

For the adult that wishes to hear the Gospel, believe in Christ, and be baptized there is a process called RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). **What is RCIA?** This process has deep roots in the Church. "In the early Church, catechetical instruction was standardized in preparation for baptism as in the writings of St. Augustine (354-430) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (330-95)." [55]

VIDEO – Converting To Catholicism: RCIA - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:47

<http://youtu.be/8q6nbUs170>

The RCIA process included four stages. **What are the four stages of RCIA?** Inquiry, Catechumenate, Purification and Enlightenment, Mystagogy and Continual Catechesis. **How do these stages match what Saint Paul speaks about in Romans?** The Inquiry stages show that all of man (every creature) is in need of God and has questions about self and God; this is why Jesus sends the apostles to all. The Inquiry is ongoing, not only for those entering the Church but for all man. The Catechumenate stage is the stage in which the Catechumens "hear" the Gospel. It is in this stage that the Catechumens are taught not only the doctrines, but also the prayer and life of the Christian. It is in this stage that the person begins to "believe". The Purification and Enlightenment stage in which those that have come to "believe" will now prepare for the Sacraments. They will prepare to put to "work" what they have believed in "word". "It may be that each of you will say to himself: I have believed; so I shall be saved. He says what is true if together with faith he also does good works; for that is true faith which does not deny work what it says in word." [56] "It does not suffice to believe; he who believes, and is not yet baptized, but is only a catechumen, has not yet fully acquired salvation." [57] Once the catechumen has been received into the Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, they are now called to continue in the faith through the final stage of Mystagogy and Continual Catechesis. It is this stage that will equip them to also be sent out and to preach the Gospel, thus the preaching of the Gospel continues. Remember one must be sent if the Gospel is going to be preached. One must preach if the Gospel is going to be heard.

We hear the Gospel first. After hearing we must pray, believe, and live the Gospel; it is the catechism that assists us in that mission. When we pray, believe and live the Gospel, this enables the Gospel to be spread to every creature so that others might hear and believe, and then believe and be baptized.

Saint Paul asks one final question. **And how can people preach unless they are sent?** It is at the feast of the Ascension that we not only celebrated Christ's Ascension into heaven, but we remember that the apostles were sent or commissioned to preach the Gospel to every creature, to the ends of the earth. It is Christ who does the sending. The disciples were sent then, and we are sent now. We are sent out into the streets, to work, to our families, schools, to every creature. We are sent to preach the Gospel so that people might hear, believe and be baptized. As Blessed Pope John Paul II said in the 8th World Youth Day in Denver, Colorado, "Do not be afraid to go out on the streets and into public places, like the first Apostles who preached Christ and the Good News of salvation in the squares of cities, towns and villages. This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel (Cfr. *Rom* 1,16). It is the time to preach it from the rooftops (Cfr. *Matth* 10,27). Do not be afraid to break out of comfortable and routine modes of living, in order to take up the challenge of making Christ known in the modern "metropolis". It is you who must "go out into the byroads" (*Matth* 22,9) and invite everyone you meet to the banquet which God has prepared for his people. The Gospel must not be kept hidden because of fear or indifference. It was never meant to be hidden away in private. It has to be put on a stand so that people may see its light and give praise to our heavenly Father."^[53]

What is the process of believing and being baptized? How does this take place in the Catholic Church? For infants, it is the parent and God-parent that calls upon the Lord for the child and asks the Church for the graces of Baptism. **How can a child (infant) believe?** "What shall we here say of children who by reason of their age are yet unable to believe. For as to adults there is no question. In the Church of the Saviour children believe through others, as they draw from others those sins which are forgiven them in baptism."^[54] It is the child, however, that through catechism classes begins to hear the Gospel and believe. Throughout the liturgical year and in life, the child grows in strength and wisdom renewing their baptismal vows and living out their baptismal vows. This baptismal grace will be made

the Church? Nine days of public or private prayer for some special occasion or intention. Its origin goes back to the nine days that the Disciples and Mary spent together in prayer between Ascension and Pentecost Sunday.^[9] Novenas are a great way to show honor to a patron Saint or an event in the life of Christ or Our Blessed Mother as we pray nine days prior to the feast day, having the feast day as the ninth day. When we are discerning or praying about a difficult decision or a special intention we can make a novena. Novenas can be helpful because it allows us to not make a hasty decision, but rather to wait for God. One of the most popular novenas is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy Novena, which begins on Good Friday and ends on Divine Mercy Sunday. Novenas can also be done in thanksgiving. For example a couple may pray a novena in thanksgiving for an anniversary or a family might pray a novena prior to a birthday in thanksgiving for life.

Why are we a people of hope and not despair? Today's readings are all about hope. Hope in the coming of Christ again to finalize His established Kingdom on earth, hope in the Holy Spirit to enkindle and awaken our souls, hope in the strength that God gives us to be disciples for Him, and hope that we can ascend body and soul to be with God for all eternity.

Where is Christ now? Jesus is in two places physically or bodily. He is in heaven. Jesus Christ "sits at the right hand of the Father" [apostles creed,] where with the Father judges the living and the dead. Jesus is also physically present in the Holy Eucharist, body, blood, soul and divinity. He is present here on this earth everywhere as God, but Jesus is not everywhere in his humanity as God-man. Besides heaven and in the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus is spiritually present in the Church when we pray and perform works of mercy. He is present when the Church gives the sacraments. He is present in the Church's teachers, especially in the successors of Peter and the Apostles. He is in the Church by the graces He gives us when we are struggling in our pilgrimage throughout our lives.^[10] [See also the Presence of Christ Lesson]^[11]

What significance is there in Jesus being "seated at the right hand of the Father"? In the book of Daniel, he prophesied the vision of the Son of Man: "To him was given dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not

be destroyed.”[12] The kingdom of Jesus Christ was established here on earth in the Catholic Church. The universal Church is in every region, every language; Jesus kingship is adorned, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against his dominion on earth and on His Church.

How should we celebrate this feast of the Ascension? Obviously, we cannot ascend ourselves body and soul into heaven. However, we can aspire by working to ascend our souls everyday to Christ in Heaven. Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there is your heart also.”[13] If Jesus is really our treasure, our hearts should not be anywhere but close to Him in Heaven.[14] St. Augustine said, “Let us ascend in spirit with Christ, that when His day comes, we may follow with our body. Yet you must know, beloved brethren, that not pride, nor avarice, nor impurity, nor any other vice ascends with Christ; for with the teacher of humility pride ascends not, nor with the author of goodness, malice, nor with the Son of the Virgin, impurity. Let us then ascend with Him by trampling upon our vices and evil inclinations, thus building a ladder by which we can ascend; for we make a ladder of our sins to heaven when we tread them down in combating them.” **How can we ascend in spirit today with Christ? What sins can we make a ladder out of to ascend to Jesus?**

VIDEO – Car has too much weight - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 0:34

http://youtu.be/e_Xygo2054

Not everything gets into heaven. Saint Augustine says that pride, avarice, impurity and other vices cannot go to heaven, they only weigh us down. We must get rid of the weight if we want to ascend. It is when we try to pull our sins through life, that we get “burnt out” in this life and possibly “burned” in the next as well. When we try to pull our sins, in the end, it is our sins that end up always pulling us. They pull us back, away from Christ. Jesus says to us all those who have heavy burdens come to me and I will give you rest. **What sins in our life have not only held us back, but have actually ended up pulling us away from Christ, away from heaven?**

Go and make disciples – Lesson and Discussion

“make disciples of all nations”

Today’s Gospel reading is the concluding chapter in Matthew’s Gospel. It is the last words we read, and possibly the last words spoken to the eleven Apostles before He ascended body and soul

And how can they hear without someone to preach? Who preaches? The Church preaches and she preaches with one voice. There is one Lord and one Gospel, so there is also one teaching. According to their baptism call, all the faithful are called to preach, but they must be preaching the same message, the message of the Gospel. The faithful should preach the same message that the Bishops (apostles) preach as the Bishops (apostles) preach the same message that Christ preaches. This is why we have a universal teaching as contained in the catechism.

What is catechism? Catechism is “a popular summary or compendium of Catholic doctrine about faith and morals and designed for use in catechesis.”[52] The Catechism uses Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the Magisterium to help give these summaries on the truths of faith and morals. There are many catechisms approved by the Church. There are universal catechisms, such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) and the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (16th Century). There are also local Catechisms “Numerous catechisms were published in various countries authorized by their respective hierarchies, e.g., the so-called Penny Catechism in Great Britain and the series of Baltimore Catechisms in the United States. Since the Second Vatican Council, all catechisms published by ecclesiastical authority must also be ‘submitted to the Apostolic See for review and approval’ (General Catechetical Directory, 119)”

Why are catechisms and catechism classes important in hearing the Gospel? The catechism and catechism classes are set up in such a way as to allow us to hear the totality of the Gospel. **What are the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church?**

The Profession of Faith – The Creed, Divine Revelation, Man’s search and desire for God

The Celebration of the Christian Mystery – Sacraments and Liturgy

Life in Christ – Beatitudes, Morality, Virtues, Ten Commandments

Christian Prayer – Why we Pray, How we Pray, the Our Father

Catechism helps us to believe (Profession of Faith) what we pray (Christian Prayer and Celebration of the Christian Mystery). Catechism helps us to live (Life of Christ) what we believe (Profession of Faith).

questions that show that we “call on him” in the Rite of Baptism. We “call on him” because we believe, for we cannot answer these questions unless we believe. The direct question is “Do you believe...”

The priest calls the candidates by their full name, first the men then the women, and each one answers, "Present." Afterward he puts these questions to them:

P: What are you asking of God's church? **All:** Faith.

P: What does faith hold out to you? **All:** Everlasting life.

P: If, then, you wish to inherit everlasting life, keep the commandments, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets. Now faith demands that you worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity, neither confusing the Persons one with the other, nor making a distinction in their nature. For the Father is a distinct Person, so also the Son, so also the Holy Spirit; yet all Three possess the one nature, the one Godhead.

He questions them further, with all giving the answers together, each one for himself in the singular forms:

P: Do you renounce Satan? **All:** I do renounce him.

P: And all his works? **All:** I do renounce them.

P: And all his attractions? **All:** I do renounce them.

Next the priest questions them on the Creed, saying:

P: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth? **All:** I do believe.

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born into this world and suffered for us? **All:** I do believe.

P: Do you also believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? **All:** I do believe.

We believe and therefore we are baptized, but how did we come to believe? Saint Paul asks, “And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?”

How have we heard the Gospel? We hear the Gospel primarily at Mass and then are instructed at Mass through the homily. We also have a catechism. In the catechism, it teaches us that we on our own should also read the Gospel in the light of Christ's Church, the Catholic Church.

into heaven. His final speech given to them is a message of trust, hope, and a mission and purpose for their lives in following faithfully our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is a disciple? A disciple is someone who is learning under a teacher or scholar. In scripture we see Jesus being called a teacher[15]. The closest and most notable disciples of Jesus Christ were his twelve closest disciples, the Apostles. However, there were also other disciples, most notably the seventy-two that were sent out by Jesus.[16] Disciple comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means follower or pupil.[17] In ancient times a pupil would literally sit “at the feet” of the teacher. Saint Luke gives us the story of Mary and Martha, Saint Mary “...sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak.”[18] Jesus says, “There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her.”[19] This story about sitting “at the feet” as a pupil is found within the same chapter as the sending out of the seventy-two disciples and just before the teaching of the Our Father. It is a reminder that disciples must choose to sit at the feet of the master. The word *discipulus* (disciple) and *disciplina* (discipline) are very similar. *Disciplina* means instruction or knowledge. It is only when we are willing to be a pupil that we are instructed, it is only when we follow that we gain knowledge.

Why are we called to discipleship? If we have been baptized then we are called to be Disciples of Christ. In the Gospel reading, Jesus instructs the Apostles to make disciples of everyone by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He goes further by telling them to teach all they had observed from Him. When we are baptized, we are claimed by Christ and are a disciple of His. We are to follow in the missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church. We are filled with the power of the triune God that cannot be hidden and kept to ourselves, but must be shared with everyone we meet. If we are to follow the Traditions and Sacred Scripture of Jesus, we must be willing to make disciples as He commanded us too. [See Counting the Cost of Discipleship Lesson][20]

In the Gospel, Jesus gives the Apostles a mission. The Ascension is a central event in Non-Catholic Christian and refers to this Gospel as the Great Commission. The Apostles are given the task of making disciples of all nations. **How will they do this?** Jesus assures them that He will be them and with us, “until the end of age”. **What will they do?** He says to baptize and to teach.

What is the importance of baptizing and teaching? Baptism is a necessary means for salvation. It is also the door to all other sacraments; it is the gate into the sacramental life. To baptize all nations, means to give all nations the sacraments. Through the sacraments people are spiritually born and grow in faith. Jesus also says to teach them to “observe all that I have commanded you”. This is the moral life, the life of Christ. The importance of baptizing and teachings is to give all nations, all people both faith and morals. The Church is the universal means of salvation for the world and is an expert in the area of faith and morals because the Holy Spirit guides her. A disciple therefore lives a life of faith and morals.

To be a disciple we must look to the first disciples, the Apostles. We must look to what they did after the Ascension. First, two angels refocused them. In the first reading, the Angels reassure them not to just stand there looking up in the sky for Jesus but to do the work He had commanded of them, and to wait for the Holy Spirit. Then, the disciples, filled with joy, went back to Jerusalem to be with Mary and await the coming of the Holy Spirit. We too, should remain close to Mary who is our mother and is also joyfully in Heaven, body and soul, with her Son, Jesus Christ.

How should one perceive us everyday? Being disciples of Jesus Christ means we should not be full of dread, worry, depression, and sin but, rather, filled with joy and hope of Heaven. We have a joy and hope because we too are already in heaven with Him. Saint Augustine says, “For just as he remained with us even after his ascension, so we too are already in heaven with him, even though what is promised us has not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.”[21] Jesus has remained with us in our soul; this is the divine life. We have a taste of heaven. We are experiencing a bit of heaven now, since our head, Jesus Christ, is in heaven and in us. If we are experiencing heaven, through the divine life and at the Holy Mass, where we join all the choirs of angels and Saints in their endless praise, we should show great joy and hope in our life. People should witness this joy and hope in our life. Those who we see on a consistent basis should observe someone who is loyal, sincere, and hardworking. People should see that despite the ups and downs of this life, we behave and live as children of God. We cannot just live the bare minimum of being “nice” as an exterior gesture, but be genuine, thoughtful, caring of people through the fruit of charity.[22] As Saint Jose

her teachings are its milk, the bread from heaven is its food.”[48] It is not by mistake that at the Easter vigil the Easter candle, which represents Christ, is dipped into the waters of the baptismal font (the womb). Christ is the Groom and the Church is the Bride. The womb of the bride, touched by the groom at the Easter vigil, conceives new life, at not only the baptisms that take place that night but also all the baptisms, all the new life that will be born of the font. Each Catholic renews this life at each Mass, where they see the womb (the font), perhaps even the very womb in which they were born, the are taught by the Church (Liturgy of the Word) and they receive the bread from heaven (Liturgy of the Eucharist). Needless to say, the Mass is not just a reminder of our Spiritual Life, but is our Spiritual Life, our life-line, in which we as branches remain connected to the vine.

Send. Preach. Believe. Be Baptized – Lesson and Discussion
“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved”

“Jesus said to his disciples: proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.”[49]

What is then necessary for salvation? One must believe. One must be baptized. “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. For the scripture says, ‘No one who believes in him will be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is the Lord of all, enriching all who call upon him. For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring [the] good news!’[50] Saint Paul asks a lot of questions in this letter which helps us understand the order in which a person come to believe and be baptized.

But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? How do we “call on him”? We call upon the Lord at our Baptism. For the Rite of Baptism[51] we (or our parents and God-parents) are asked specific questions about the desire to be saved, the renouncing of Satan, the acceptance of Christ. These

Are there any other kinds of Baptism? There are three kinds of baptism: the baptism of water, which is the Sacrament of Baptism. There is baptism of desire, which was described earlier in this lesson. It is when the person has a desire for baptism of water and has perfect contrition but is unable to receive it. There is also baptism of blood, which is given to those who suffer martyrdom for the true faith without having yet received baptism. [43]

Why does the person where white? The white robes infants and adult's wear when baptized symbolizes that the person baptized has put on Christ and has risen with Christ.[44] It also represents the purity and beauty of the soul, which has been washed from sin. They are as holy as Christ and receive Jesus in them.[45] This is why many times Saint Francis of Assisi was known to genuflect at a baby or a person who had just been baptized. They are completely filled with the Holy Trinity.

Why do they use a candle at baptism? The light represents the light of Christ now shining in the person where there was once darkness due to sin. The Paschal light, which was lit at the Easter vigil, is the same light that is given at baptism. The light also represents the love for God and our neighbor. It is the light of good example shining for the whole world to see.[46]

Why does the priest or deacon place oils on the person? The oil used is known as the sacred chrism. Sacred Chrism is perfumed oil, consecrated by the bishop, and signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized. This is the same oil used in our Confirmation when we receive the Holy Spirit. Someone may also notice the priest laying hands on the child numerous times. This shows that the person is the property of God and is under His protection now.

What is the importance of the baptismal font? The font is the womb that holds the waters of life, just as the waters within the womb of a mother, sustain the life of her baby. Saint Gregory of Nyssa calls, Faith the womb. Our parents were asked at during the Rite of Marriage, "Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?"[47] Parents have faith and the greatest gift they can give their children is the faith, they therefore bring their children to the womb of the Church, the baptismal font. "Faith is the womb that conceives this new life, baptism the rebirth by which it is brought forth into the light of day. The Church is its nurse;

Maria Escriba wrote, "Today's feast reminds us that our concern for souls is a response to a command of love given to us by our Lord. Our responsibility is great, because to be Christ's witness implies first of all that we should try to behave according to his doctrine, that we should struggle to make our actions remind others of Jesus and his most lovable personality."[23] In short, to be a disciple, people must see Christ when they see us.

MOVIE – Kung Fu Panda training - POWER - POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 4:56

<http://youtu.be/EIXRkShk2V>

If a person is a good disciple, others can see the master in them. In Kung Fu and other martial arts as well as sports and music, we can often recognize who a person was trained or studied under. Shifu means master. Poh, the Panda in training under Shifu begins to imitate the master and in the end has discipline over one of his greatest struggles, his hunger. At the end of the training Poh says, "I'm not hungry anymore." To be a disciple is to learn discipline and to take on the traits of the master who we imitate.

Receive the Power – Lesson and Discussion

"All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me"

What power did the Apostles receive? The Apostles were the first Bishops of the Church. All the power Jesus has He gives to the eleven, and as He said in today's Gospel, He has all power in Heaven and on earth. He extends this power in a special way to the head, Saint Peter before His passion, when Jesus said to Peter, "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." [24] Jesus gives Peter the power on earth and in heaven to bind and loose powers of the Church that Christ founded upon Peter. All the Apostles had the power to cure people, call upon the Lord to help them, to speak in many different languages, to baptize, to forgive sins, and to recall his passion and death by bringing Christ to all in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

MOVIE – Aladdin Jafar becoming a genie – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 3:41

<http://youtu.be/okvnUzTRwU>

In this classic Disney movie, Jafar is the villain in the movie and is seeking enough power to rule the world.

MUSIC VIDEO – Kanye West - POWER - POP CULTURE CONNECTION - 1:43

<http://youtu.be/L53gJP-TtG>

What does the world consider power? “No one man should have all that power. The clock’s tickin’, I just count the hours. Stop trippin’, I’m trippin’ off the power.” A worldly view of power is temporary, when others have power, we count the hours until they are gone and we can have the power. When we have the power, we count the hours, in anticipation of one day losing the power. This temporal view of power leads to jealousy, envy, pride, violence and other vices. **How is the power that Jesus gives the Apostles different than the power the world gives?**

The power that Christ gives is eternal because Christ Himself, the giver is eternal. The power that Christ gives is used for eternal things, for the soul and so it is a power that the world cannot give. Saint Augustine says, “Seek the things that are above, not the things that are on earth.”[25] Many men seek power in the things of this earth, temporal power, a power that so often leads to the service of self. Disciples seek power in the things that are above, a power that calls us to the service of others, even if that means laying down our own life for another. For with great power, comes great responsibility.

Why were there only eleven of them? Judas had already committed suicide and was dead. The significance of mentioning only eleven was to drive the point home of what Judas had done, and to remind the readers of this Gospel the vacant spot, which was to be filled by Matthias.

What was the mission of the Apostles? Their mission, their work was to baptize and to teach the Jews and Gentiles alike. Can anyone baptize another person? Yes. Under extreme circumstances, any baptized Christian can baptize someone who is not baptized and wants to be. The person who is baptizing the other person should find some source of clean water, and after saying a simple prayer can baptize the person by saying, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Anyone has the power to baptize another person, in an extreme situation, because Jesus had issued this not just to the Apostles, but also to all. However, the Sacraments of Reconciliation and institution of the Eucharist, He reserved only for the Apostles and their successors, not to the masses.

What does Jesus mean “I am with you always”? Jesus wanted to reassure the Apostles once more that even though He was to ascend back to heaven, He was not leaving them as orphans. The new covenant, which was established by the blood of Christ,

water supply for this many people to have been immersed. Even if there had been a place big enough, the city would not have allowed 3,000 people to pollute their source of water. However, we see as early as 70 A.D. in Didache writings that the Church allowed the pouring of water as an acceptable means.[38] Also, we see in the earliest Christian artwork reference to baptism through the pouring of water and not by immersion. For many people, water is a scarcity, and to be able to conserve water, they would pour water on people.

Another reason why we do not do immersions is due to people’s safety and health. In baptism, the person has water poured on their heads three times. This is done because, as Saint Gregory the Great explains, it signifies the rebirth of the person with Christ who rose from the dead after three days.[39] Before pouring was the standard, it would not be out of the norm to see someone be immersed three times in the water. For obvious reasons this custom was removed.

Does someone need to be “rebaptized” when coming to the Catholic Church? No, one does not need to be baptized again when coming into the Catholic Church if the person has received baptism from a different Christian faith. The Sacrament of Baptism only needs to be dispensed once and leaves an indelible mark on our souls. Each sacrament must have the correct form (words) and matter (action, physical elements). “The rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water, or pouring water on the head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”[40]

Why do we have Godparents for baptism? Godparents are not necessary for a valid baptism, but they are important. They can serve as official representatives of the community of faith. Their functions after baptism are to serve and provide the child’s religious training if the parents are unable to do so.[41] The Godparents must be Catholic because someone who is not a Catholic would not be able to instruct the child in the Catholic faith. St. Augustine beautifully wrote of the role and responsibilities of a Godparent, “They should use all care, often to admonish in true love their godchildren that they may strive to lead a pure life; they should warn them against all detraction, all improper sins, and keep them from pride, envy, anger, and revenge; they should watch over them that they may preserve the Catholic faith, attend the church services, listen to the word of God, and obey their parents and their pastors.”[42]

main problem with this is that they do not see baptism as a Sacrament like Catholics do.

The Catholic Church has always taught all are called to be baptized young and old alike. To withhold baptism from anyone is withholding their salvation, their union with Christ, and being brought into the Christian family. When a husband and wife are getting married, they make a vow to each other, the Church, their family, friends, and God that they will raise their children in the Catholic faith. The first thing to do in raising them in the faith is bringing them into the Church, and this can only be done through the Sacrament of Baptism.

Another way to think of presenting infants to baptism is to think of a baby shower. The baby typically has not been born yet. The mother gets together with family, friends, and loved ones. They have a nice party and there are usually some presents. The presents are typically for the infant; cute little outfits, a stroller, car seat, crib, and other things for the baby. Now imagine if the mother said, "These are all so wonderful! But I'm going to wait until the child is old enough to understand and accept these gifts. The child would be maybe four, five, or six years old before they could be old enough to open the gifts and understand what they were, but unfortunately they would be too old for those gifts. Baptism is the most precious gift we can give to our loved ones, and to wait until they are older does not help bring the graces, and the light of Christ to them.

Lastly, it is found in scripture. In Acts chapter sixteen we see two places where Saint Paul baptized not only a person but also their "household"[34] and "all his family"[35]. Also, when greeting the Corinthians, Paul said "I did baptize also the household of Stephanas"[36] In these examples; we see entire families, men, women, and children being baptized.[37]

Why doesn't the Catholic Church do immersion baptisms?

The Catholic Church recognizes and accepts total immersion, the pouring of water, and the sprinkling of water as valid ways to baptize the common practice in the Roman Rite is pouring or "infusion". Non-Catholics may argue that the only true baptism is through total immersion. An example of why pouring of water instead of immersion was practiced in the early Church is when Peter and the apostles, immediately after Pentecost, converted over 3,000 people! Imagine trying to baptize that many people in a day. Archaeologists have shown that there was not sufficient

was to unite the whole world with Him. Jesus Christ is King of the Earth, and therefore it is impossible for Him to abandon His kingdom. As mentioned in the previous lesson of this packet, Jesus is with us spiritually when we are gathered in His name. He is also present in the Sacraments, and in particular, He is present at every moment in the tabernacle of any Catholic Church, body blood, soul and divinity.

How is the Mass related to what Jesus is saying in this Gospel reading? We can see the Mass all over the place in this weekend's reading. He brings his followers up on a mountain where they worshiped, but they still doubted. For many people going to Mass, their Church has steps or is up on a hill. The steps signify the ascending to something that is holy, and leaving behind our past, our sin, and the world below. Many high altars in older Churches had 3 to 15 steps that the priest would climb to ascend to the altar. In the extraordinary form of the Roman Rite, the priest waits until after the Confiteor (I confess) to ascend up the steps to the altar. The high altar is a symbol for heaven. Just as Jesus the high priest ascended into heaven, so to the priest, who is in the person of Christ, ascends to the altar at each Mass and we in spirit ascend with Him as a sign of our hope. Even with this hope, we, like the apostles, at times may doubt or struggle with Jesus being truly there body, blood, soul, and divinity. Jesus speaks to the eleven as He speaks to us when he puts those fears and doubts away reminding them that He is in full control because He has full power in heaven and on earth because He is God. Sometimes, there is a baptism celebrated during the Mass. This beautiful Sacrament calls us to remember our own baptismal promises, and to welcome in a new disciple of Christ. "By Baptism we are made a member of the Church. We enter the Church through Baptism. We are to recall our own dignity as a son or daughter of God through Baptism each and every time we enter God's House. The church building or House of God where we worship is an image of our heavenly home and the Kingdom of God. Since Baptism admits us to the Church and new life in Christ, each time we enter the church building, this sacred place, we are to bless ourselves with Holy Water, the sacramental symbol of our Baptism into the Church...We need Baptism for entrance into the Church, Christ's Mystical Body, and for entrance into heaven...When you bless yourself with Holy Water, recall that you received the Sacrament of Baptism which brought you into the Church." [26]

We see that in the Mass we experience all that Jesus asked of the apostles before He ascended. We sit at his feet, like a disciple, at every Mass, “make disciples of all nations”. Mass is universal and available in all nations. We remember our baptism, “baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” as we walk in the Church and dip our finger in the holy water to remind us of our baptism; We also remember to baptize our self and through the Confiteor (I confess) and the Credo (I believe) we renew our baptismal vows and through the Liturgy of the Eucharist, we receive the source and summit of our Faith, which only the baptized are allowed to participate in. In the Liturgy of the Word we are taught by the priest to “observe all that I have commanded you”. We learn and observe Jesus’ teachings and commandments in both the Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist. We hear our priest teach us as Christ taught his followers. What Christ commanded us to do is found in the Gospel which is the pinnacle of the Liturgy of the Word. It is for this reason that we stand for the Gospel and sing Alleluia. Lastly, and probably most importantly, we see Jesus is truly with us at all times in the Most Blessed Sacrament. We truly know “I am with you always”, knowing that Christ is truly present in the holy Eucharist and is with us always, we should always pray the beautiful prayer, "May the Heart of Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament, be blessed, adored and praised with grateful affection, at every moment in all the Tabernacles of the world, even to the end of time."

Call to Baptism – Lesson and Discussion

“Go and baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit”

Jesus knew His work had been fulfilled. However, He also knew that the Church would be the engine, which would drive the kingdom to the ends of the earth. The means by which the Church would do this would be through the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptism is essential for all believing Christians. Jesus briefly speaks of the beauty of the Holy Trinity. He did not say, “Go and baptize in my name” or “Go and baptize in the Father’s name”, but He said to baptize in all three persons of the Holy Trinity.

What is Baptism? Baptism is the first of all Sacraments that we receive as Catholics. Baptism was instituted by Christ by His baptism[27], and we are all called to be baptized as we read in

today’s Gospel reading. The word comes from Greek that means to “plunge” or “immerse”. [28]

Baptism is also necessary for salvation. Christ himself taught this in John 3:5, “Jesus answered, ‘Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit’.” and again, He also commanded his disciples to baptize all who believe in Him as we read in today’s Gospel. The Church does not know of any other way other than Baptism that would assure someone entry into eternal beatitude. [29] **What about those that wanted to be baptized but weren’t able to?** The Church has always believed that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. [30] For “catechumens”, those who are in the process of receiving Baptism, who die before their Baptism, their full desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and love, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive the sacrament. [31] In regards to children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God. God’s infinite mercy, and Jesus’ desire for all to be saved through Him and in particular children, allows us to hope there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. [32] This is why the Church is adamant about not preventing little children from being baptized.

What does Baptism do? The Sacrament of Baptism does many things for us. The spiritual effects of Baptism are the removal of original sin, the removal of any previous sins along with the guilt of sin and all punishment due to sin. It also infuses grace and virtues, brings you to Christ and His Church, receive the baptismal character, and the right to Heaven. Baptism helps restore us back to the state Adam was in before the fall. However, the effects of original sin still remain after Baptism; namely suffering and death, concupiscence and ignorance. Baptism does however give us the grace to cope with suffering, the promise of release from suffering after death, the grace to resist sinful tendencies, and the virtues of faith, hope, and love which help us to believe all that God has shown us. [33]

Why do we baptize infants? Many of us were baptized when we were just infants and do not remember it. Some non-Catholics will argue that we should not baptize infants. Their main reason is because the child has not reached the age of reason and cannot understand and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The