

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CATHOLIC IN GOOD STANDING?

In order to receive the Sacraments (including the Eucharist) & be an EMHC or a Confirmation sponsor or Godparent

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) lays the precepts or norms of life as a faithful Catholic.<sup>1</sup> They are as follows:

## **1. Honor the Lord on Sundays by actively participating at Mass and resting from work;**

We participate at Mass to give glory to God and be nourished by the Holy Eucharist in order to live out our Faith. Mass is not meant to be entertaining, but when properly understood and actively participated in, Mass is definitely exciting!

## **2. Participate in the Sacrament of Confession at least once a year;**

Regular Confession is for the soul what a doctor's visit is for the body. Confession strengthens us with sacramental grace to live a more Christian life. This is why the Church asks all Catholics to go *at least* once a year.

## **3. Participate in worthy reception of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season;**

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith. Receiving the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ Himself is the ultimate gift, thus we must receive Him worthily.

## **4. Observe the Church's Holy Days of Obligation;**

The Holy Days of Obligation are:

January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

August 15, the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

November 1, the solemnity of All Saints

December 8, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

December 25, the solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

## **5. Observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence from meat; and**

The days of Fasting from large meals are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. The days to abstain from meat are Fridays, especially in Lent.

## **6. Support the Church in Her needs through *Stewardship* (time, talent, & treasure).**

The Church is our Home as Catholics, we must care for Her upkeep by offering our *time* in volunteering, our *talent* in Her functions, and our *treasure* through tithing monetarily.

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<sup>1</sup> CCC 2041-2043

The Church reminds us “the precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life, bound to and nourished by liturgical life.” In other words, the rules of life are bookended in the moral life and prayer of our Faith – it is a ‘package deal.’ Therefore, to be in **good standing** with God and His Church:

- one cannot support abortion;
- one cannot support contraception;
- one cannot support redefining marriage, i.e. anything other than one man and one woman;
- one cannot support the erroneous belief that attendance at the Christmas and Easter Mass celebrations are sufficient for a relationship with Christ
- one cannot support the gravely erroneous belief that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is unimportant
- if married, one’s marriage must be recognized by the Catholic Church
- if unmarried, one cannot be cohabitating with his/her boyfriend/girlfriend

The Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist is the highest of the Sacraments. The Eucharist **is** the food for our souls. It is truly the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. To remove ourselves from Him is starving ourselves of God Himself and to receive unworthily is the gravest of sacrileges, doing immense damage to our relationship.

Being a faithful Catholic does not mean ‘not questioning the why or how of our Faith.’ Unfortunately, for the past few decades, many questions on matters of faith were answered with “Because the Church says so.” This is not the right way to be a Catholic. We have an obligation to learn “**why** the Church says so” and then give our full assent to the teachings of the Church.

Some people claim that a person’s conscience can legitimately contradict Church teaching. This is false, misleading to others, and is a true example of an un-informed and “un-formed moral conscience.

If you don’t understand the faith – take the time to read about it; participate in religious education opportunities of the Parish; talk to other Catholics; and/or meet with a parish priest. Learn **why** it is we believe, and **what** we believe. Pray for courage not only to live it out, but also to proclaim it to a world that needs to hear the Truth of the Faith. May God bless you in your faith and good works.