

With joy and reverence, we present the Top Ten Reasons to be Catholic, as submitted by the faithful of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

We humbly and respectfully invite you to reflect on these treasures of our Catholic faith.

If you are not a Christian, we invite you to explore a relationship with Jesus Christ through the Catholic Church.

If you are already a Christian, we invite you to look more closely at the Catholic Church.

If you are a non-practicing Catholic, we invite you to come home.

If you would like to speak with someone about the Catholic faith, please contact a priest at a local Catholic Church.

If you would like more information on the teachings of the Catholic Church, please consult the Catechism of the Catholic Church at : <http://goo.gl/N93g16> or use your smart phone/ tablet to scan the QR code below.



- 1 THE EUCHARIST
- 2 SACRAMENTS
- 3 COMMUNITY
- 4 APOSTOLIC TRADITION
- 5 MARY, OUR BLESSED MOTHER
- 6 SCRIPTURE & TRADITION
- 7 CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
- 8 PRAYER & DEVOTIONS
- 9 THE SAINTS
- 10 UNIVERSAL CHURCH



TOP TEN REASONS TO BE CATHOLIC



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1 THE EUCHARIST

The Eucharist is our # 1 reason because Jesus is our # 1 reason for being Catholic. We believe the Eucharist IS Jesus. We take seriously Jesus' words in the Gospel of John: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (John 6:54-55). We follow Jesus' command at the Last Supper to celebrate the Eucharist: "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me" (Luke 22:19). Jesus' sacrifice, his self-gift on the cross, continues to be made present in the celebration of the Mass, where through the Eucharist we receive Jesus himself and are brought into union with God and communion with one another.

2 SACRAMENTS

We believe the Sacrament of Baptism is our entry into the life of Christ (John 3:5), as do many Christians. We also celebrate six other sacraments, each based on Sacred Scripture and given to us by Jesus Christ. With each sacrament, it is Christ who acts through the Spirit. It is Christ's body we receive in the Eucharist (Matthew 26:26); Christ's touch we feel when sealed in the Spirit at Confirmation (John 20:22); Christ's words of forgiveness we hear in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Luke 5:21); Christ's healing we experience in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (Mark 8:22-25); Christ's blessing voiced at the Sacrament of Matrimony (Mark 10:9); and Christ's ministerial service given in the Sacrament of Holy Orders (John 13:15). When celebrating a sacrament, we are touched by Jesus. By God's grace, we become what we receive and are strengthened for the journey.

3 COMMUNITY

We believe our faith is lived out and transmitted through the community of disciples. Our faith community is based not on common ideas or interests, but rooted in the Sacrament of Baptism and nourished through the reception of Jesus in the Eucharist, where we become one

as the Body of Christ. We believe this is the unity Jesus spoke of in the Gospel of John, "that they may all be one, as you Father are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me" (John 17:21). As a result of this unity, we are committed to sharing our gifts and resources for the good of our brothers and sisters. Our religious communities model this through their prayer and service. We are dedicated to praying for one another, both those living and deceased. Our belief in community extends even beyond death to the Communion of Saints.

4 APOSTOLIC TRADITION

Jesus proclaimed: "And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. ...I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:18, 19). We believe the Church was built on the witness of the first apostles and carried on by their successors and the Christian community through the ages. The pope receives his authority through an unbroken line of succession that began with Saint Peter. Each pope receives the keys of Saint Peter and thereby directly carries on the work of Jesus Christ. The pope, also known as the Bishop of Rome, and all bishops, are connected to this apostolic succession. The bishops ordain priests and deacons who serve the community and lead us in the celebration of the sacraments. As members of the Catholic Church, we are connected to Jesus and his Gospel through this apostolic tradition.

5 MARY, OUR BLESSED MOTHER

We love and honor Mary, our heavenly mother, just as Jesus did. We give her respect and reverence as the Mother of God. We listen to her son, Jesus, when he speaks from the cross: "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (John 19: 27). We take Mary into our hearts. We do not worship Mary (she is only human), but we do honor her for saying "yes" to the Holy Spirit, for her closeness to her Son, and for being Jesus' first and most faithful disciple. We recognize Mary as the Mother of the Church—mother of salvation—for guiding the Church and leading each of her faithful into a closer relationship with her son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

6 SCRIPTURE & TRADITION

We believe our faith is built on both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. For years, the Christian faith was passed on through oral tradition. "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). It was much later, at the Council of Carthage in 379 A.D., when the Catholic Church declared which writings were divinely inspired and selected for the canon of Sacred Scripture, the Bible, which inspires our doctrine, our prayers, and our way of life. Even so, the oral tradition continued in addition to the written Scriptures. This tradition, which can be traced back to the apostles, is called our Sacred Tradition. We believe the Church continues to be guided by the Holy Spirit through the teaching authority of the Church (the communion of Bishops, known as the Magisterium), which addresses the issues of our time and speaks the Truth in one voice. The Catechism of the Catholic Church contains our sacred teachings.

7 CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: "The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society." Catholic social teaching may be, as some say, the best-kept secret of the Church. The foundation of Catholic social teaching is the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of each human life—as made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). Catholic social teaching, based on the Gospel, commits us to working on behalf of each human person, especially the least of our brothers and sisters (Matthew 25:40). Catholic social teaching challenges us to participate in service and advocacy. The members of the Catholic Church, the largest charitable organization in the world, serve in hospitals, orphanages, refugee camps, schools, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and nursing homes.

8 PRAYER & DEVOTIONS

With all Christians we pray the Our Father, but we also have many other prayers and devotions—2000 years' worth! We pray the Hail Mary, based on the Gospel of Luke: "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). Many of the faithful pray the rosary, which is a meditation on the life of Christ. Besides Holy Mass, the Church prays daily the Liturgy of the Hours, which contains prayers, Scripture, and hymns in order to praise God and to intercede for all people, day and night. Our sacred, beautiful devotions include blessing ourselves with the sign of the cross, ashes on our forehead to begin Lent, and walking the footsteps of Jesus with the Stations of the Cross.

9 THE SAINTS

The Catholic Church has officially declared thousands of Christians as saints. These were ordinary men, women, and children who lived with extraordinary faithfulness to Jesus Christ. The saints, these "holy ones" (Philippians 4:21), followed God's will with great love and heroic virtue—often in the face of persecution. They teach us the pathway to sainthood through the witness of their humility, single-mindedness, simplicity, prayer, and action. We believe each one of us was created to be a saint—to be fully alive in Christ—through our unique call to holiness. We believe in the Communion of Saints, all the holy ones who together form "the great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1). We ask the saints in heaven to intercede for us because of their close proximity to God, just as we ask our friends to pray for us on earth (Colossians 1:9-15).

10 UNIVERSAL CHURCH

The word "catholic" means universal. The Catholic Church, established by Jesus Christ, is meant for all people for all times. The Mass is the same celebration—same prayers, same Scripture, same Eucharist—whether celebrated in Italy, Syria, India, Congo, the Philippines, Mexico, Burma, the United States or Argentina. We value diversity and the rich expressions of our faith. We welcome all people—no matter one's race, language, culture, country, or economic status. We welcome you!