

Basic Beliefs of Catholicism

From: Catholicism For Dummies By Rev. John Trigilio, Jr. & Rev. Kenneth Brighenti

Catholics are, first and foremost, Christians who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that Jesus is the Head of the Church. Catholicism shares some beliefs with other Christians, but essential Catholic beliefs include the following:

The Bible is the inspired, error-free, and revealed word of God. The Church also believes in Sacred Tradition.

Baptism, the Rite of becoming a Christian, is the beginning of the spiritual life & is necessary for salvation — whether the Baptism occurs by water, by blood, or by desire.

God's Ten Commandments provide a moral compass — an ethical standard to live by.

The existence of the Holy Trinity — one God in three persons. Catholics embrace the belief that God, the one Supreme Being, is made up of three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Catholics also believe that since Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, all humans are born with original sin, which only Baptism removes. A happier belief is in grace, a totally free, unmerited gift from God. Grace is a sharing in the divine; the inspiration to do God's will.

The Catholic Church believes in 7 Sacraments.

Some standard Catholic prayers:

Our Father: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary: Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Act of Contrition: O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You. I detest all my sins because of your just punishments, but most of all because they offend you, My God, who are all good and worthy of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasions of sin. Amen.

Grace before meals: "Bless us, O Lord, and these, Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Personal prayer & Liturgical prayer

Retreats, Scripture Studies, Groups

Devotions: Stations of the Cross, Chaplet of Divine Merc

The Twelve Articles of Catholic Faith

This list of twelve articles mirrors the Apostles' Creed, a prayer that sets out Catholic tenets:

Article 1: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. This affirms that God exists, that he's a Triune God (one God in three persons, known as the Holy Trinity), and that he created the known universe.

Article 2: And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. This attests that Jesus is the Son of God and that he's most certainly divine. The word Lord implies divinity, because the Greek Kyrios and the Hebrew Adonai both mean "lord" and are ascribed only to God. So the use of Lord with Jesus is meant to profess his divinity. The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew Jeshua, meaning "God saves." So Catholics believe that Jesus is Savior.

Article 3: Who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. This affirms the human nature of Christ, meaning he had a real, true human mother, and also affirms his divine nature, meaning he had no human father but by the power of the Holy Spirit was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He's therefore considered both God and man by Christians—fully divine and fully human.

Article 4: He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. The human nature of Christ could feel pain and actually die, and he did on Good Friday. The mention of Pontius Pilate by name wasn't meant so much to vilify him forever in history but to place the Crucifixion within human history.

Reference is made to an actual historical person, the Roman governor of Judea, appointed by Caesar, to put the life and death of Jesus within a chronological and historical context. It also reminds the faithful that one can't blame all Jews for the death of Jesus, as some have erroneously done over the ages. Certain Jewish leaders conspired against Jesus, but the actual death sentence was given by a Roman and carried out by Roman soldiers.

Article 5: He descended into hell. The third day he arose again from the dead. The hell Jesus descended into wasn't the hell of the damned, where Jews and Christians believe the devil and his demons reside. Hell was merely a word that Jews and early Christians used to describe the place of the dead. This passage affirms that on the third day he rose, meaning Jesus came back from the dead of his own divine power. He wasn't just clinically dead for a few minutes; he died — then he rose from the dead. More than a resuscitated corpse, Jesus possessed a glorified and risen body.

Article 6: He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. The Ascension reminds the faithful that after the human and divine natures of Christ were united in the Incarnation, they could never be separated. In other words, after the saving death and Resurrection, Jesus didn't dump his human body as if he didn't need it anymore. Catholicism teaches that his human body will exist forever. Where Jesus went, body and soul, into heaven, the faithful hope one day to follow.

Article 7: He will come again to judge the living and the dead. This article affirms the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the world to be its judge. Judgment Day, Day of Reckoning, Doomsday—they're all metaphors for the end of time when what's known as the General Judgment will occur. Catholics believe

that after the death of any human person, immediate private judgment occurs and the person goes directly to heaven, hell, or purgatory (an intermediate place in preparation for heaven).

Article 8: I believe in the Holy Spirit, This part reminds the believer that God exists in three persons — the Holy Trinity — God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. What's referred to as the Force in the movie Star Wars isn't the same as the Holy Spirit, who is a distinct person equal to the other two — God the Father and God the Son.

Article 9: the holy catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, Catholics believe that the Church is more than a mere institution and certainly not a necessary evil. It's an essential dimension and aspect of spiritual life. Christ explicitly uses the word church (*ekklesia* in Greek) in Matthew 16 when he says, "I will build My Church."

Article 10: the forgiveness of sins, Christ came to save the world from sin which is essential to Christianity. Catholicism believes sins are forgiven in Baptism and in the Sacrament of Penance.

Article 11: the resurrection of the body, From the Catholic perspective, a human being is a union of body and soul, so death is just the momentary separation of body and soul until the end of the world, the Second Coming of Christ, the General Judgment, and the resurrection of the dead. The just go, body and soul, into heaven, and the damned go, body and soul, into hell.

Article 12: And in life everlasting. As Christ Our Savior died, so, too, must mere mortals. As he rose, so shall all human beings. Death is the only way to cross from this life into the next. At the very moment of death, private judgment occurs; Christ judges the soul: * If it's particularly holy and virtuous, the soul goes directly to heaven. * If it's evil and wicked and dies in an unrepented state of mortal sin, it's damned for eternity in hell.

Sacraments

We recognize that the Sacraments have a visible and invisible reality, a reality open to all the human senses but grasped in its God-given depths with the eyes of faith. When parents hug their children, for example, the visible reality we see is the hug. The invisible reality the hug conveys is love. We cannot "see" the love the hug expresses, though sometimes we can see its nurturing effect in the child.

The visible reality we see in the Sacraments is their outward expression, the form they take, and the way in which they are administered and received. The invisible reality we cannot "see" is God's grace, his gracious initiative in redeeming us through the death and Resurrection of his Son. His initiative is called grace because it is the free and loving gift by which he offers people a share in his life, and shows us his favor and will for our salvation. Our response to the grace of God's initiative is itself a grace or gift from God by which we can imitate Christ in our daily lives.

The saving words and deeds of Jesus Christ are the foundation of what he would communicate in the Sacraments through the ministers of the Church. Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church recognizes the existence of Seven Sacraments instituted by the Lord. They are the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist), the Sacraments of Healing (Penance and the Anointing of the Sick), and the Sacraments at the Service of Communion (Marriage and Holy Orders).