

The Prudentine Catechism: Fundamentals of Christian Doctrine

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Chapter I: The Origins & Purpose of the World

1. *Who made the world?*

God made the world.

2. *How did God make the world?*

God made the the whole world out of nothing, merely by an act of His almighty will.

3. *Did God create the whole world at one stroke?*

No; the process of creation went on for long periods of time.

4. *What are these periods called in holy Scripture?*

They are called the six days of creation.

5. *For whom did God make the world?*

God made the whole world for men.

6. *Are all created things good?*

Yes; all created things are good and beneficial to us, provided we use them in the right way and for the right purpose.

Hence it is lawful to slaughter and eat animals, since God created animals for the service of man.

7. *Is not cruelty to animals a sin?*

Yes it is, because cruelty to animals is repugnant to reason

and to humane feeling, and easily leads to the habit of being cruel to human beings too.

8. *How did men come into this world?*

All men are descended from the first couple, Adam and Eve.

9. *What follows from this?*

It follows that we are all of the same stock and have the same human nature; consequently the caste system, which puts fundamental difference between man and man, is an insult to God and man.

10. *How did Adam come into this world?*

God formed Adam's body out of clay and breathed into him an immortal soul.

11. *How was the first woman made?*

God made the first woman out of Adam's own body; and into her, too, He breathed an immortal soul.

12. *For what purpose did God create man?*

God created man to be the priest and king of the material world and to become partaker of His own life and happiness throughout eternity.

13. *Why did God appoint man as the king and master of the whole world?*

God appointed man as the king and master of the whole world because God made man according to God's own image.

14. *What follows from this?*

It follows that every man, regardless of color, nationality or position in life, is entitled to our respect and esteem.

15. *Is the image and likeness of God in our body or in our soul?*

It is in our soul; hence we must care infinitely more for our souls than for our bodies.

16. *What are the prerogatives of the human soul?*

The human soul is immortal, intelligent and endowed with free will.

17. *Does not human life end with death?*

No, human life does not end with death, for death is only the door by which we enter into eternal life.

18. *What will that eternal life after death be like?*

For the good it will be perfect happiness; for the wicked, unending misery.

19. *What is the meaning of free will?*

Free will means that man does not act through compulsion, but freely decides to act this way or that way, or not to act at all.

20. *Does free will mean that man is free to do whatever he likes according to his own counsel?*

No, free will does not mean that man is free to do whatever he likes according to his own counsel, for if he is to save

his soul and attain everlasting happiness, man must choose to fulfil God's holy will.

21. *How can we know God's holy will?*

We can know for certain God's holy will only by means of the true religion, which it is our bounden duty to seek.

Chapter II: Which is the True Religion?

1. *What is religion?*

Religion is a way of worshipping and serving God, by means of which we hope to attain salvation.

2. *Who is God?*

God is the Creator and Lord of the whole world.

3. *Since when does God exist?*

God is from all eternity and will remain for ever.

4. *Where is God?*

God is everywhere; He sees, knows and pervades all things.

5. *Can we see God?*

We cannot see God with the eyes of the body, because He is a pure spirit, but we can know Him from His works.

6. *Do all people worship the true God?*

No, all people do not worship the true God, for there are many people who worship false gods, evil spirits, fakirs, or famous men, and this is idolatry.

7. *Where did the different religions come from?*

Man made them.

8. *Are all religions good?*

There are many good points in most religions, but they also have many errors and defects. [Lúcio: No, all religions are not good, for, despite incorporating many good things and truths, the better to mislead men, they have not been authorized by God, are not according to His will, and do not lead souls to Him.]

9. *Is the Christian religion on the same level as other religions?*

It is not; for man did not make the Christian religion, but Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, made it. Therefore, the Christian religion contains all truth and is free from all errors.

10. *How did we come to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?*

We gathered [understand] this from His own words and from His deeds.

11. *Did Jesus Christ ever say that He is the Son of God?*

Yes, He clearly said: "I and the Father are one; who has seen me, has seen the Father." The Jews, therefore, accused Him before Pilate of having called Himself the Son of God.

12. *What works did Christ perform from which it was manifest that He is the Son of God?*

He forgave sins by His own authority, He healed the sick, expelled evil spirits and raised the dead to life.

13. *Which is the greatest of all the miracles performed by Jesus Christ?*

His greatest miracle is this: that, even as He had foretold, He rose from the dead on the third day after His burial.

14. *What benefit can the true religion procure for us?*

The true religion can procure everlasting happiness for us.

15. *What is everlasting happiness?*

Everlasting happiness is the fullness of life that shall be granted for ever to those who are found acceptable to God at the time of their death.

16. *What will be the fate of those who, at the time of their death, are not found acceptable to God?*

Their fate will be a life of endless misery, shame and complete despair.

17. *Will all those who, at the time of death, are found acceptable to God be admitted straight away into heaven?*

No, only those who are altogether pure shall be admitted straight away into heaven; the others will be sent to purgatory.

18. *What is purgatory?*

Purgatory is a period of suffering, to be undergone by those souls who die at peace with God, but without having attained the state of perfect purity.

19. *Is all the benefit to be derived from the true religion to be obtained only in the next world?*

The chief benefit of the true religion, namely salvation, can be obtained only in the next world, but if all men accepted and practiced the true religion here on earth, we would gain immensely in worldly happiness since there would be no exploitation and oppression of men by men, no pauperism and no wars.

20. *Is the Christian religion obligatory for all men?*

Yes it is, since it is that way of worshipping and serving God, which He Himself has ordained.

21. *How can the non-Christians find out that the Christian religion is perfect and without any defect, and that their own religion is a human invention full of defects?*

Let them compare earnestly and impartially the Christian religion with their own and they will soon learn where the truth lies.

22. *Why then do so few Hindus and Muslims embrace Christianity?*

One reason is that many non-Christians do not care for truth and spiritual things, and consequently they do not bother to seek the truth.

23. *Is there any other reason why the majority of Hindus and Muslims refuse to become Christians?*

Another reason is that though many Hindus and Muslims are convinced of the superiority of Christianity, they dare not embrace it out of fear of worldly losses and persecution.

24. *Is it not partly the fault of the Christians themselves that the Christian faith does not spread more rapidly in this country?*

Yes, it frequently is very much their fault: because they are not sufficiently fervent in the practice of their religion and they often even scandalize non-Christians by their conduct.

25. *Will all non-Christians, who did not embrace Christianity, be damned?*

Only those non-Christians, who have willfully rejected Christianity, even though they knew that it was the divinely ordained way of salvation, will be damned on that account.

Chapter III: Short Survey of Christ's Human Life

1. *What is the fundamental belief of Christians?*

The fundamental belief of Christians is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who became man for our own salvation.

2. *When did the Son of God become man?*

The Son of God became man about two thousand years ago.

3. *In what country was He born?*

The Son of God was born in Israel, also called Palestine, the land of the Jews.

4. *In what particular place was He born?*

The Son of God was born in a poor stable, on the outskirts of Bethlehem.

5. *Was Jesus Christ born in the same manner as other men?*

Jesus Christ was not born in the same manner as other men; He was born from a virgin, through the Holy Ghost, and without the intervention of a human father.

6. *What is the name of that virgin? [Who was that Virgin?]*

The name of that virgin is the Blessed Virgin Mary. [That Virgin is the Blessed Virgin Mary]

7. *Was Jesus Christ truly human?*

Yes, Jesus Christ was truly man; He had a human body and a human soul like ours.

8. *Was Jesus Christ only man?*

No, Jesus Christ was not only human; He is from all eternity the true Son of God, and equal to the Father.

9. *How many Gods are there?*

There is only one God, but in Him there are three distinct persons, namely the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

10. *Can we understand this?*

No, we cannot understand this; this is the unfathomable mystery of God's nature, which we call the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

11. *If God the Father has a Son, then must He not have wife also?*

This is an idle and ridiculous objection, based on the assumption that God the Father is a man, whereas He is the Supreme and Perfect Spirit. Who would dare to say that the Supreme and Perfect Spirit, who, by a simple act of His

will, created the whole world out of nothing, is unable to beget for Himself a son without the help of a woman?

12. *But do you not believe that Jesus Christ, whom you call the Son of God, was born of the Virgin Mary?*

Yes, we do believe that, but we do not believe that Jesus Christ became God by being born of the Virgin Mary; we say that He, who is God from all eternity, became man in the womb of the Blessed Virgin.

13. *How many years did Jesus Christ stay in this world?*

Jesus Christ lived in this world for about thirty-three years.

14. *What did He do up to the age of thirty?*

Up to the age of thirty, He remained with His parents and was obedient to them.

15. *How did He spend His last three years?*

During His last three years, He went about all over the country, healing the sick, expelling evil spirits, comforting the poor, and preaching the kingdom of God.

16. *How did Jesus Christ die?*

Jesus Christ died on a cross, between two criminals, after having undergone unspeakable sufferings.

17. *On what day did Jesus Christ die?*

Jesus Christ died on a Friday, at about three o'clock in the afternoon.

18. *Who buried the body of Jesus Christ?*

Nicodemus and Joseph [of Arimathea], two wealthy and

virtuous Pharisees, buried Jesus' body in a tomb cut out of a rock.

19. *What happened on the following Sunday?*

On the following Sunday, which was the third day after His death, Jesus arose again from the tomb.

20. *For how long did Jesus stay in this world after His resurrection?*

Jesus Christ stayed in this world for forty days after His resurrection.

Chapter IV: Jesus Christ is the Savior of Mankind

1. *For what purpose did the Son of God become man?*

The Son of God became man in order to re-open the road to salvation for the whole of mankind.

2. *How came it about that the road to salvation was closed for us all?*

Our first parents sinned, and thus, together with their descendants, incurred the divine curse, and forfeited all their supernatural privileges.

3. *How did Adam and Eve sin?*

Adam and Eve sinned by acting upon the advice of the devil, disobeying God's orders.

4. *What orders had God given them?*

God had ordered them not to eat the fruit of a certain tree, in the middle of the Garden of Eden.

5. *What did God say to them?*

God said to them: "If you eat this fruit, you shall die."

6. *How did the devil deceive them?*

The devil promised them that by eating that fruit, they would become the equals of God.

7. *What was the result of their disobedience?*

As a result of their disobedience, suffering and death entered into the world, and we were all cursed and excluded from salvation.

8. *Is it not unjust that we should all be excluded from salvation on account of the sin of our first parents?*

No, it is not unjust that we should all be excluded from salvation on account of the sin of our first parents, because the salvation which we forfeited through Adam's sin and recovered through Christ, was entirely beyond our human rights, and due only to a gratuitous divine promise.

9. *What was this gratuitous divine promise?*

This gratuitous divine promise was that we would be admitted as adopted children into God's own life, His own happiness and glory, provided that our first parents remained faithful unto Him.

10. *Did God leave our first parents in a state of complete despair?*

No, God did not leave our first parents in a state of

complete despair, for on the very day of their fall, God said to the serpent: "I shall put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; her seed shall crush thy head."

11. *Who is that seed of the woman, who was to crush the head of the serpent?*

That seed of the woman, who was to crush the head of the serpent is Jesus Christ, the son of Mary.

12. *How did Jesus Christ defeat the devil?*

Jesus Christ defeated the devil by being obedient to His Father unto death, even the death of the cross.

13. *What benefit have we derived from Christ's death?*

Christ's death on the cross removed from us the divine curse and He became for mankind a source of new life.

14. *What have we to do in order to obtain salvation through Christ?*

In order to obtain salvation through Christ, we must accept Him sincerely and wholeheartedly, through an absolute faith in Him and in His holy doctrine; and we must also follow the path of life, which He has shown us.

Chapter V: The Christian Life

Part I

1. *Do we, Christians, possess only human life?*

No; besides human life, which we received through our parents, we also possess another life, which we received

from Christ, and which, therefore, is called the Christian life.

2. *What is the new life that we received from Christ?*

The new life that we have received from Christ is the life of sanctifying grace, by which we become partakers of God's own life.

3. *Is this life of sanctifying grace superior to the ordinary human life?*

Yes, it is immensely superior to the ordinary human life or the natural life, wherefore it is called the supernatural life.

4. *When do we obtain the Christian life?*

We normally obtain the Christian life when receiving holy Baptism, for which reason holy Baptism is called the sacrament of our spiritual birth.

5. *What is the supreme and all-embracing law of the Christian life?*

The supreme and all-embracing law of the Christian life is that we should love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves for the sake of God.

Part II

6. *What are our principal duties to God?*

Our principal duties to God are:

- i. To firmly believe in God and in all that He has revealed to us [— this is called the virtue of faith];
- ii. To confidently expect eternal salvation from Him and to trust fully His paternal love and all-pervading providence [— this is called the virtue of hope];

- iii. To love Him above all things [— this is called the virtue of love];
- iv. To honor and worship Him above all creatures [— this is called the obligation of religion].

7. *How do we sin against our duty of faith?*

We sin against our duty of faith by:

- i. Denying God's existence (atheism);
- ii. Willfully rejecting the whole or part of His revelation (unbelief, heresy, [schism]);
- iii. Willfully entertaining doubts against any revealed truth;
- iv. Wantonly reading books or attending lectures which propagate false doctrines;
- v. Attending the religious services of man-made religions or sects.

8. *How do we sin against our duty of hope?*

We sin against our duty of hope by not caring for, or despairing of, our eternal salvation, or by sinning through presumption.

9. *When do we sin against our obligation of loving God above all things?*

We sin against our obligation of loving God above all things whenever we willfully disobey any of God's commandments.

10. *How do we sin against our duty of honoring and worshipping God above all things?*

We sin against our duty of honoring and worshipping God above all things by:

- i. Giving supreme honor to any creature or to false gods (idolatry);
- ii. Entertaining superstitious beliefs or superstitious fears;
- iii. Having dealings, or attempting to have dealings, with evil spirits (witchcraft, spiritism, fortune-telling);
- iv. Neglecting the prescribed acts of public worship

11. *What will enable us to love God above all things?*

The firm belief that God is not only our Creator and supreme Master, but also our loving Father who, in order to save us, has not even spared His only begotten Son.

Part III

12. *What is our first duty towards our neighbor?*

Our first duty towards our neighbor is to entertain feelings of love, sympathy and goodwill towards all men, even towards our enemies.

13. *When do we sin against this obligation?*

We sin against this obligation whenever we yield to feelings of hatred, jealousy or vindictiveness.

14. *Is it enough to entertain friendly feelings towards our neighbors?*

No, it is not enough, for we must also be anxious to help and serve him, and refrain from all such acts as would harm or injure him.

15. *How can we help and serve our neighbor?*

We can help and serve our neighbor by practicing towards him the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

16. *What are the principal spiritual works of mercy?*

The principal spiritual works of mercy are:

- i. To teach the ignorant;
- ii. To comfort the afflicted;
- iii. To give counsel to those that are perplexed;
- iv. To warn and correct the sinner;
- v. To pray for the living and the dead.

17. *What are the principal corporal works of mercy?*

The principal corporal works of mercy are:

- i. To feed and clothe the indigent;
- ii. To visit the sick and the prisoners;
- iii. To give shelter to strangers;
- iv. To bury the dead.

18. *Which are those acts from which we must refrain in order not to harm or injure our neighbor?*

The acts from which we must refrain in order not to harm our neighbor are:

- i. Quarrelling, fighting and murder, by which we injure our neighbor's body;
- ii. Deceit, swindling, theft and robbery, by which we deprive our neighbor of his worldly goods;
- iii. Backbiting, false testimony, calumny and abuse, by which we attack the good name and character of our neighbor;

- iv. Giving scandal, by which we injure his soul.

Part IV

19. *Have we no obligation towards ourselves?*

Yes, we do have obligations towards ourselves; it is our bounden duty to seek and pursue our harmonious self-development to the utmost, and to make the best possible use of all the graces and opportunities which God grants us.

20. *How can we sin against this obligation (to ourselves)?*

We can sin against this obligation (to ourselves) by not making sufficient use of the talents and the means of grace at our disposal and by neglecting to check and control our evil inclinations.

21. *Which are the evil inclinations that prevent our human and Christian progress?*

The evil inclinations that prevent our human and Christian progress are:

- i. Lust,
- ii. Greed,
- iii. Pride,
- iv. Laziness,
- v. Gluttony and
- vi. Excessive drinking.

22. *How can we check and control those evil inclinations?*

We can check and control these evil inclinations by cultivating habits of mortification and self-denial.

Chapter VI: God's Grace & Its Need

1. *Is it easy to live a Christian life?*

No, it is very difficult, because the devil is the deadly enemy of our Christian life and constantly endeavors to destroy it.

2. *Has the devil any helpers for doing this work of destruction?*

Yes, the world and our own corrupted nature are the devil's faithful allies for effecting this work of destruction.

3. *How do the devil, the world and our corrupted nature strive to injure our Christian life?*

The devil, the world and our corrupted nature strive to injure our Christian life by teaching us a way of life which is radically opposed to the Christian way of life.

4. *What is the Christian way of life?*

The Christian way of life is to keep oneself detached from this passing world, and to hunger and thirst after justice; to be meek and humble, to love and serve one's neighbor and to forgive one's enemies.

5. *What is the worldly way of life?*

The worldly way of life is to seek only riches and glory, pleasure and enjoyment, to exploit one's neighbor and to destroy one's enemies.

6. *Can we live a Christian life by our own strength?*

No, we cannot live a Christian life by our own strength; to live a Christian life we constantly need God's grace.

7. *What sort of grace does God give us?*

God gives us two kinds of graces, namely sanctifying grace and actual grace.

8. *What is sanctifying grace?*

Sanctifying grace is a divine gift, which makes us holy, acceptable to God, and partakers of His divine life.

9. *Do we receive anything else with sanctifying grace?*

Yes, along with sanctifying grace, we receive three divine faculties, namely Faith, Hope and Love (or Charity).

10. *For what purpose are these faculties given to us?*

These faculties are given to us to enable us to live a Christian life.

11. *When do we first receive sanctifying grace?*

Normally we receive sanctifying grace for the first time when we receive holy Baptism.

12. *Can we lose sanctifying grace?*

Yes, we lose it as often as we commit any mortal sin.

13. *What is actual grace?*

Actual grace is a special help, which God gives us on particular occasions, either to overcome some temptation or to perform some good deed.

14. *Which are the principal means at our disposal for obtaining God's grace?*

There is one general means which is at the disposal of all

men, namely prayer; and there are some particular means, namely the seven sacraments, which are at the disposal of Christians only.

Chapter VII: Prayer

1. *Which is the principal and general means for obtaining God's grace?*

The principal and general means for obtaining God's grace is prayer.

2. *What is prayer?*

Prayer is a raising of one's heart and mind to God in order to talk to Him and to listen to Him.

3. *How should we talk to God?*

We should talk to God as children to their father.

4. *What should we talk to God?*

We should not only ask Him for spiritual and temporal favors, but we should also praise and thank Him and express our loyalty and devotion.

5. *When ought we to pray?*

We should pray at the beginning and at the end of each day, also before and after meals, and whenever we are tempted or in trouble.

6. *What is required to pray well?*

In order to pray well, we should pray with attention and devotion and with full confidence in God's almighty power and infinite love.

7. *Which is the best and most beautiful prayer?*

The best of all prayers is the Lord's Prayer which begins with the words, "Our Father, who art in heaven...."

8. *Recite "The Lord's Prayer"*

[Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name,
Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done,
On earth, as it in heaven,
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us,
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
Amen].

9. *Why is this prayer called "The Lord's Prayer"?*

This prayer is called "The Lord's Prayer" because Our Lord, Jesus Christ, Himself taught this prayer to His apostles.

10. *May Christians pray to anyone else besides God?*

Yes, we may and **should** pray to the Saints, because they are God's best friends; we should, however, always remember that they can do nothing for us by themselves, but only recommend us to God.

11. *Who is the highest and the most powerful of all the Saints?*

The highest and the most powerful of all the Saints is the

Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, whom we call Our Lady, and who is the Mother of us all.

12. *Is there any special prayer by which we address Jesus' Mother?*

Yes, there is the beautiful prayer which we call the angelic salutation.

13. *Why is this prayer called the angelic salutation?*

This prayer is called the angelic salutation because it begins with the words by which the Angel Gabriel greeted Mary, when he came to announce to her that God's Son was to be born from her womb.

14. *Which are those words?*

They are, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee."

15. *[Recite the angelic salutation.]*

Hail Mary, full of grace,
The Lord is with thee,
Blessed art thou amongst women,
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.

16. *From where do we get the remaining words of this prayer?*

They are the words that Elizabeth used for congratulating Mary, because she had conceived Jesus in her womb.

17. *From where do we get the additional prayer, "Holy Mary... "?*

This prayer was composed by the Church.

18. *[Recite this prayer.*

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Pray for us, sinners,
Now, and at the hour of our death,
Amen].*

Chapter VIII: The Sacraments

1. *Are there, besides prayer, any other means by which Christians can obtain God's grace?*

Yes, there are at the disposal of Christians seven more means for obtaining God's grace, namely the seven sacraments.

2. *Enumerate the seven sacraments.*

The seven sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

3. *What are sacraments?*

Sacraments are sacred rites, instituted by Christ, by means of which He gives us His grace.

4. *What is the characteristic property of the sacraments?*

The characteristic property of the sacraments lies in the fact that they procure for us God's grace by means of an outward sign, which indicates that grace.

5. *What various purposes do the various sacraments serve?*

Two of the sacraments have been instituted for the purpose of initiating or renewing the Christian life; while the other five are meant to protect and develop it.

6. *What do you call the two sacraments that have been instituted for initiating or renewing the Christian life?*

We call these two sacraments – which have been instituted for initiating or renewing the Christian life – the sacraments of the dead.

7. *Which are the sacraments of the dead?*

The sacraments of the dead are Holy Baptism and the sacrament of Penance.

8. *Why are these two sacraments called the sacraments of the dead?*

These two sacraments are called the sacraments of the dead because they have been instituted to revive the spiritually dead.

9. *Who are the spiritually dead?*

The spiritually dead are those people who do not possess the life of sanctifying grace.

10. *Why are the other five sacraments called the sacraments of the living?*

The other five sacraments are called the sacraments of the living because only those people may receive them, who are alive with the life of sanctifying grace.

11. *Are we allowed to make frequent use of all the sacraments?*

Except for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, we may receive the other sacraments as often as it is necessary or useful.

12. *Why is it that we are not allowed to receive Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders more than once?*

We are now allowed to receive Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders more than once because these three sacraments impress a mark upon our souls, which can never be effaced.

Chapter IX: Baptism (Incorporation into Christ)

1. *What is holy Baptism?*

Holy Baptism is a sacrament that removes original sin and incorporates us into Christ.

2. *What is original sin?*

Original sin is the old curse, which fell upon mankind as a result of the sin of our first parents, and on account of which we are excluded from God's friendship and from salvation.

3. *Does holy Baptism remove original sin only?*

Holy Baptism also removes all our actual sins.

4. *How is holy Baptism given?*

While pouring water on the head of the recipient, the

following words must be said: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

5. *Is holy Baptism necessary for salvation?*

Yes, holy Baptism is necessary for salvation because Jesus Christ has ordained that we should be baptized, and He has emphatically declared that no man may enter the kingdom of heaven unless he be born again through water and the Holy Ghost.

6. *Can no one be saved through Christ unless he receives holy Baptism?*

Yes; those souls who have never had the opportunity of receiving holy Baptism can be saved through Christ, provided they sincerely try their best to fulfil God's holy will as well as they know it.

7. *May we baptize anybody at random?*

No; we may not baptize an grown-up person, unless he himself wishes to be baptized, believes in Christ and sincerely repents of his sins.

8. *Is it lawful to re-baptize a Protestant when he returns to the Catholic Church?*

If after careful investigation concerning the validity of his previous Baptism, complete satisfaction cannot be obtained, then it is not only lawful but obligatory to re-baptize him conditionally.

9. *Does not a person, who receive conditional Baptism, receive Baptism twice?*

No, a person who accepts conditional Baptism, does not

receive Baptism twice; because the second Baptism only applies to him in case the first one was null and void.

10. *May all small children be baptized?*

All small children may be baptized, provided their guardians accept the responsibility to instruct them in the Christian faith.

11. *Do little children need Baptism?*

Yes, little children need Baptism; since they too are burdened with original sin.

12. *Do little children who die without Baptism go to hell?*

No, little children who die without Baptism, do not go to hell, but they go to Limbo; because the punishment of hell will be inflicted only on those people who have willfully and deliberately rebelled against God.

13. *What is Limbo?*

Limbo is a state of natural happiness, suited to the requirement of human nature, whereas heaven is a state of supernatural happiness infinitely above the requirements of human nature.

Chapter X: Confirmation

1. *At what age does the spiritual battle against the devil, the world and our corrupted nature begin?*

The spiritual battle against the devil, the world and our corrupted nature begins as soon as we are old enough to distinguish between good and evil.

2. *Is there any sacrament to give us strength for this spiritual battle?*

Yes, there is a sacrament to give us strength for this spiritual battle; namely the sacrament of Confirmation by means of which we are enrolled into the army of Christ, and become soldiers of Christ.

3. *Who gives us the sacrament of Confirmation?*

The Bishop is the proper person to give it, but when necessary, the pastor may do so.

4. *How does the Bishop give Confirmation?*

Extending his hands over the people, he prays that the Holy Ghost, together with His gifts, may descend upon them.

5. *What else does the Bishop do?*

Dipping his thumb into the holy oil of chrismation, he makes the Sign of the Cross upon the forehead of each individual, and then gently taps them on the cheek.

6. *Why does the Bishop make the Sign of the Cross on our forehead?*

The Bishop makes the Sign of the Cross on our foreheads to make us understand that we should always openly profess our holy faith and never be ashamed of it.

7. *Why does the Bishop tap us on the cheek?*

The Bishop taps us on the cheek in order to make us understand that we must be prepared to face suffering and persecution for the sake of our holy faith.

8. *When do we receive the grace of strength for which Confirmation was instituted?*

We receive that grace not only at the time of Confirmation, but also later on in life, whenever the profession and defense of our holy faith require special strength and courage.

Chapter XI: The Holy Eucharist

1. *Is there any sacrament for nourishing our Christian life?*

Yes, there is a sacrament for nourishing our Christian life, namely the Blessed Sacrament, or the Holy Eucharist, in which the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ become the food of our souls.

2. *What is the outward appearance of the Holy Eucharist?*

The outward appearance of the Holy Eucharist is that of bread and wine.

3. *What is the reality of the Holy Eucharist?*

The reality of the Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the outward appearance of bread and wine.

4. *How does the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ?*

The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ through the ministry of the priest who consecrates them.

5. *Does the priest consecrate [by his own natural power], in his own name and by his own authority?*

No, the priest consecrates by the power bestowed upon him by Jesus Christ through the Apostles and Bishops, and in His name and by His authority.

6. *Did Jesus Christ Himself ever consecrate bread and wine into His own Body and Blood?*

Yes, He did so for His apostles, after [during the course of] the Last Supper.

7. *How did He do it?*

Taking bread, He blessed and broke it, and gave it to His apostles, saying, "Take ye this and eat, for this is my body"; He then took the cup and blessed it, also saying, "drink ye all of this, for this is my blood."

8. *Did Jesus Christ really mean to say that this bread and wine had become His Body and Blood?*

He most certainly did, as it appears from what He once said on another occasion: "My flesh is truly meat and my blood is truly drink; who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him; who does not eat my flesh, in him there is no life."

9. *Did Jesus Christ also give the power of consecrating to His apostles?*

Yes, He did so when, immediately after He had blessed the bread and wine at the Last Supper, He said to His apostles, "Do ye this for a commemoration of me."

10. *When does the Church carry out this order?*

The Church carries out this order every day, each time holy Mass is celebrated.

11. *What is holy Mass?*

Holy Mass is a sacrifice in which the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ are offered to God the Father, for the benefit of the living and the dead.

12. *Are the sacrifice of holy Mass and the sacrifice of the Cross two separate sacrifices?*

No, they are one and the same sacrifice; since the sacrifice of holy Mass is a remembrance, representation and a renewal of [and a participation in] the sacrifice of the Cross.

13. *Was not the sacrifice of the Cross sufficient for our salvation?*

Yes, it is more than sufficient, but it benefits us only to the extent that we accept and appropriate it, by a living faith.

14. *What then is the use or purpose of the sacrifice of the Mass?*

Its purpose is to reproduce before the people of all time the sacrifice of the Cross, and thus to remind us continuously of Christ's infinite love and to make us partake abundantly of the infinite merits of the sacrifice of the Cross.

15. *Which are the principal parts of the holy Mass?*

The principal parts of the holy Mass are the Offertory, the Consecration and Holy Communion.

16. *What is necessary fully to partake of the sacrifice of holy Mass?*

Fully to partake of the sacrifice of holy Mass, we should devoutly receive Holy Communion.

17. *Do we receive in the Holy Communion the living or the dead Christ?*

We receive the living Christ, for Christ died but once and now dies no more.

18. *But are not the Body and the Blood of Christ separated in Holy Communion?*

No, they are not; though it is a fact that they are presented and symbolized separately; but in reality Christ's Blood is with His Body, His Body is with His Blood.

19. *Why is it that they are represented and symbolized separately?*

They are represented and symbolized separately in order to remind us of His death on the cross.

20. *What is the commandment of the Church regarding the reception of the Holy Eucharist?*

The Commandment of the Church regarding the reception of the Holy Eucharist is that we must receive it at least once a year, namely during Easter tide.

21. *Are we not allowed to receive Holy Communion more than once a year?*

We are allowed to receive it daily, provided we do so with a good intention and after careful preparation.

22. *What is necessary for receiving Holy Communion?*

It is absolutely necessary that we should be in the state of sanctifying grace, and in normal circumstances; it is also required that we should be fasting from midnight.

23. *May those Christians, who have lost the state of sanctifying grace, never again receive Holy Communion?*

Those Christians, who have lost the state of sanctifying grace, may only receive it again after they have recovered the state of sanctifying grace by making a good confession.

Chapter XII: The Sacrament of Penance.

1. *When do the devil, the world and our corrupted nature succeed in their efforts to injure our souls?*

The devil, the world and our corrupted nature succeed in their efforts to injure our souls when they succeed in making us commit sin.

2. *When do we commit sin?*

We commit sin whenever we act against our conscience.

3. *What is conscience?*

Conscience is the voice of God, speaking in our hearts, bidding us to do good and condemning us when we do evil.

4. *From where do we get the knowledge of good and evil?*

We get this knowledge mainly by reflecting upon ourselves, for God's laws are engraved in our hearts, since we were made in the likeness of God.

5. *Do we not need the divine revelation and the guidance of the Church for acquiring and preserving the complete and correct knowledge of good and evil?*

Yes, we do; because our human nature has been greatly upset and partly perverted through original sin.

6. *Do all sins cause the same amount of harm to our souls?*

No; some sins, which we call "venial", only cause slight injury, and this can be healed without the Sacrament of Penance; whereas certain other sins, which we call "mortal", totally destroy the life of sanctifying grace in our souls.

7. *Which sins are mortal sins?*

All those offences are mortal sins that either grievously dishonor God, or seriously harm our neighbor or ourselves.

8. *Is a grievous offence against God's honor, or against the love of ourselves, or of our neighbor, always a mortal sin?*

Yes, it is, provided we realize the grievousness of the offence and commit it willfully.

9. *Is there any means of recovering the life of sanctifying grace, after we have lost it by falling into mortal sin?*

Yes, there is a means of recovering the life of sanctifying grace, after we have lost it by falling into mortal sin; namely, the sacrament of Penance.

10. *What is the sacrament of Penance?*

It is a sacrament by means of which the sins committed after our Baptism can be forgiven.

11. *Who forgives sins in the sacrament of Penance?*

In the sacrament of Penance, those persons forgive sins, who hold apostolic authority for that purpose; namely the Bishops and the priests.

12. *Do the Bishops and the priests forgive sins in their own name?*

No, they forgive sins in Christ's name.

13. *When did Christ give the power to forgive sins to His apostles?*

Jesus Christ gave the power to forgive sins to His apostles on the evening of the day of His resurrection, when He appeared the first time to His apostles.

14. *What did He say to them on that occasion?*

Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.

15. *Is making a good confession only a question of telling all our sins to a priest?*

No; the chief thing is to sincerely repent from our hearts for all our sins, and to make a honest resolve never to sin again.

16. *Why should we be sorry for our sins?*

We should be sorry for our sins because they offend our heavenly Father and endanger the eternal welfare of our souls.

17. *Which sins ought we to confess?*

We must confess at least all the mortal sins committed since our last confession, and say how many times we have committed them.

18. *If anybody should willfully withhold one mortal sin from his confession, would that confession still be good?*

It would not; none of his sins would be forgiven, and such a person would be guilty of one more mortal sin by making a sacrilegious confession.

19. *If anybody who has made a sacrilegious confession wishes to make his peace with God, what has he to do?*

He will have to confess all the sins committed by him since his last good confession, and also say how many bad confessions he has made since.

20. *If anybody forgot to mention one or more mortal sins in his confession, would his confession be a bad one?*

No; provided he has the other required dispositions, all his sins would be forgiven.

21. *If afterwards those mortal sins, which we forget to mention in our confession, should come back to memory what ought we to do?*

We ought simply to mention this fact in our next confession.

22. *What have we to do after confession?*

After our confession, we should fulfil our penance and thank God for His great mercy.

23. *What sort of penance do we get in confession?*

Either some prayers to say, or some other good work, or some act of mortification to perform, which the priest imposes upon us by way of punishment.

Chapter XIII: Extreme Unction

1. *When does the spiritual warfare, which we have to wage against the devil, the world and our corrupted nature, come to a decision?*

The spiritual warfare, which we have to wage against the devil, the world and our corrupted nature, comes to a decision only at the moment of our death.

2. *What quest does death settle for us?*

Death settles this supreme and all-important question: Whether we shall go for all eternity to God or to the devil?

3. *Has not Jesus Christ provided a special means of grace to help us on that supreme and all-important occasion?*

Yes; He has provided the sacrament of Extreme Unction, which is to help us die a good and holy death.

4. *When are we allowed to receive Extreme Unction?*

We are allowed to receive Extreme Unction whenever our life is in danger in any serious illness.

5. *How is Extreme Unction given?*

By anointing the sick person upon his eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and hands and feet; the priest prays for him that all his sins may be forgiven.

6. *Is the only purpose of Extreme Unction to prepare us for a holy death?*

No; sometimes Extreme Unction helps us to recover our bodily health, and when a person is unable to make his

confession, it also forgives all his sins, provided he be well disposed.

Chapter XIV: Holy Orders

1. *From where do we get the sacraments?*

We get the sacraments from the hands of the priest.

2. *What is a priest?*

A priest is a consecrated man, who has vowed his whole life to the spiritual service of the Church.

3. *How are priests made?*

Priests are made through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

4. *What is Holy Orders?*

Holy Orders is a sacrament of Christ, which can be given only by a Bishop, and by means of which certain chosen men are set apart for the spiritual service of the Church, and given power and special graces to carry out that service worthily.

5. *What special powers does the sacrament of Holy Order confer on the priest?*

The sacrament of Holy Order confers on the priest the power to forgive sins in Christ's name, and the power to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

6. *What is the difference between a priest and a Bishop?*

A Bishop possess the fullness of the priesthood, and can, therefore, not only forgive sins and offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass, but can also ordain priests.

7. *What are our duties towards the Ministers of the Church?*

We should not only honor and obey them, but also help and assist them in every possible manner.

Chapter XV: Matrimony

1. *To whom is entrusted the right and the duty to procreate new members for the Church?*

That right and duty is entrusted only to those men and women who, by embracing the holy state of matrimony, have vowed before God and before the Church a lifelong fidelity to each other, and an unstinted devotion to the children whom God may give them.

2. *Has not Our Lord Jesus Christ provided some special means of grace for those persons who undertake such difficult obligations?*

Yes, Christ Jesus has raised the marriage-contract of Christians to the rank and dignity of a sacrament, in order to enable them to fulfil all the obligations of their holy state.

3. *What are the special obligations of married people?*

The special obligations of married people are to remain faithful to each other until death, and to devote all their life and strength to the welfare of their children.

4. *Can a Christian marriage never be dissolved?*

A Christian marriage that has been properly contracted can only be dissolved through the death of one of the partners, since Christ has said that no man should put asunder what God has joined.

5. *Are Catholics allowed to contract marriages before a civil registrar or a Protestant minister?*

No, they are not; and if they attempt to do so, they incur the excommunication of the Church, and their marriage-contract is null and void before God and the Church.

6. *When is the celebration of marriages forbidden?*

The celebration of marriages is forbidden during the penitential seasons of the Advent and of Lent.

Chapter XVI: The Church

1. *From where do we get the true doctrine of Christ?*

We get the true doctrine of Christ from the teaching Church.

2. *Who constitutes the teaching Church?*

The Pope and the Catholic bishops constitute the Teaching Church.

3. *Who is the Pope?*

The Pope is the Vicar of Jesus Christ in this world, and the visible head of the whole Church on earth.

4. *What are Catholic Bishops?*

Catholic Bishops are those men who, as successors of the apostles, govern, under the supremacy of the Pope, some limited part of the Church, called a diocese.

5. *Can we trust the Pope and the Catholic Bishops always to teach us the right Christian doctrine?*

Yes; we can have full confidence in them, since Jesus Christ has promised to His apostles and to their successors that the Spirit of Truth would abide in them, and that He Himself would remain with them until the end of the world.

6. *Is it in accordance with Christ's own will that we should unreservedly accept the teaching of His apostles and of their successors?*

Yes, it is; since He Himself said to His apostles: "Who hears you, hears me; and who despises you, despises me."

7. *Is not the holy Bible sufficient for teaching us the true Christian doctrine?*

It is not; for whenever different views about its meaning arise, the holy book cannot decide which of those views are right and which are wrong.

8. *Why do we accept the Pope as the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and as the visible head of the whole Church?*

We accept the Pope as the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth and as the visible head of the whole Church because the Pope is the successor of Saint Peter.

9. *How is the Pope the successor of Saint Peter?*

Saint Peter was martyred at Rome, while governing that Church; therefore whosoever replaces Saint Peter as Bishop of that Church inherits his authority.

10. *Did Saint Peter receive any special authority from Jesus Christ?*

Yes, he did; Jesus Christ appointed him as the shepherd of His entire flock, when He said to him: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep."

11. *Is there any other reference in the holy Gospels to this special authority of Saint Peter?*

Yes, it is clearly stated in the Gospels that Jesus Christ promised this special authority to Peter when He said to him: "Thou art a rock and upon this rock I will build my Church; the gates of hell shall never overwhelm it; to thee I shall give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven."

12. *Does this special authority of Saint Peter pass on to his successors as well?*

Yes, it does; for according to Christ's words, by this special authority Peter was to become a rock on which the Church should be founded and stand firm till the end of the world; it is evident, of course, that if the building is to be lasting, the foundation also must be lasting.

13. *Does the Church only consist of the Pope and the Bishops?*

The Pope and the Bishops constitute the Teaching Church; and all the other faithful who owe them allegiance constitute the Learning Church.

14. *What is the Church?*

The Church is the congregation of all those people who through Faith and baptism have been incorporated into Christ and form between them one body, which lives by the Spirit of Christ.

15. *Are not the Protestants also members of Christ's Church?*

Though their various sects are undoubtedly pure human institutions, [in themselves, and of themselves, severely

displeasing to God], yet individual Protestants may belong to Christ's Church, provided they be [of sincere good will and seeking God's truth, and] unaware of their obligations to join the Catholic Church.

16. *Is the whole Church of Christ confined to this world?*

No; here on earth there is only a small portion of Christ's Church, which we call the Church Militant; the other faithful who have died in the Lord are either in Purgatory, which we call the Church Suffering; or in heaven, which we call the Church Triumphant.

Chapter XVII: Holy Scripture & Apostolic Tradition

1. *From where does the Teaching Church obtain the true Christian doctrine?*

The Teaching Church obtains the true Christian doctrine from the holy Scriptures and the Apostolic Tradition.

2. *What are the holy Scriptures?*

The holy Scriptures are the collection of those writings, that have been composed under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The book containing this collection is called the holy Bible.

3. *How is the holy Bible divided?*

The holy Bible is divided into the Old and New Testaments.

4. *What is written in the Old Testament?*

The Old Testament narrates the origin of the world and of

mankind; also the origin of the Jews, the chosen people and of their religion, and the history of God's dealing with them.

5. *Was the Jewish religion from God?*

Yes, it was; hence we call it a revealed religion.

6. *For what purpose did God institute the Jewish religion?*

God instituted the Jewish religion to prepare the Jewish people and the whole world for the advent of Christianity.

7. *Is the Jewish religion even now still binding?*

No; it was only a provisional and imperfect thing and has been superseded by the Christian religion.

8. *Did Jesus Christ terminate the Old Testament?*

Yes; He terminated it by fulfilling and completing it.

9. *Is the Law of Moses no longer binding?*

Only those precepts of the Mosaic Law are still binding, which coincide with the [Christian and] Natural Laws.

10. *Ought we to revere the holy Scriptures?*

Certainly; we must hold them in great reverence, read them devoutly and never swear on them lightly or falsely.

11. *Is it obligatory for all Christians to read the holy Scriptures?*

There is no strict obligation to read the holy Scriptures, since Christ never commanded us to do so; but merely bids us hear the Church; yet it is most commendable and useful

to read the holy Bible, and especially the New Testament, provided we do so in the right spirit.

12. *Why does the Church forbid us to read those bibles which have been published without her sanction?*

The Church forbid us to read those bibles which have been published without her sanction because those bibles are usually incomplete and often misleading, and therefore dangerous to our holy faith.

13. *What is written in the New Testament?*

The New Testament relates to the history of Jesus' life, of the foundation and early expansion of His Church. It also gives many glimpses of His holy doctrine, and of the teaching of the apostles.

14. *Does the New Testament contain a complete record and a full statement of the Christian religion?*

No. This is the contention of many Protestants, but this contention is nowhere proved in the New Testament itself.

15. *From where, then, do we get the other things of our religion, which are not found in the New Testament?*

We get those things from Apostolic Tradition.

16. *What is an Apostolic Tradition?*

An Apostolic Tradition is a Christian doctrine, or a Christian practice, which is not mentioned or clearly mentioned in the holy Scriptures, but which has been handed down to us from apostolic times, through successive Christian generations.

17. Which are the principal Apostolic Traditions?

The following are the principal Apostolic Traditions:

- i. Mary, the Mother of God, was exempted from original sin; she is therefore called the Immaculate Conception.
- ii. She remained a virgin throughout her life.
- iii. Her dead body was preserved from corruption and taken up to heaven (the Assumption of Our Lady).
- iv. Saint Peter was martyred at Rome and died as Bishop of that Church.
- v. Baptism can be validly given by any person, even a non-Catholic.
- vi. Baptized children, who die before they can believe in Christ, are saved through their Baptism.
- vii. The souls of the faithful, who are not fit to enter heaven on account of their imperfect purity, can be cleansed of their stains through the sufferings of purgatory.
- viii. That all the writings and only those contained in the Catholic Bible are inspired and of divine origin.

Chapter XVIII: The Marks of the True Church of Christ

1. *How shall we be able to identify the True Church of Christ among the numerous sect that claim to be Christian?*

We shall be able to identify her by four marks, which she alone displays, and which are not to be found in any human institution.

2. *Which are those four marks?*

These four marks are the following:

- i. Apostolicity,
- ii. Unity,

- iii. Universality or Catholicity, and
- iv. Holiness

3. *In what does the Apostolicity of the True Church consist?*

The Apostolicity of the True Church consists in the fact that she reaches back through an unbroken line of Popes to the Apostolic Church, from which she descends and with which she is identical.

4. *In what does the Unity of the True Church consist?*

The Unity of the True Church consists in the fact that all over the world, and throughout the ages since her foundation, she has had one supreme authority, and taught the same doctrine, the same sacraments, and the same form of divine worship.

5. *In what does the Universality or Catholicity of the True Church consist?*

The Universality or Catholicity of the True Church consists in the fact that from the beginning, the True Church of Christ claimed the whole world as its prospective domain, as she is now in fact the only Church that is spread among all nations and in all countries.

6. *In what does the Holiness of the True Church consist?*

The Holiness of the True Church consists in the fact that she has always upheld and preached all the principles of morality and holiness, has always faithfully kept and administered all the means of holiness bequeathed to her by her Founder, and always shone out before the world by the extraordinary sanctity of many of her children.

7. *Is there any other proof to show that God Himself abides and works in the Catholic Church?*

There is another proof, in the fact that God has frequently performed through her the most astonishing miracles.

8. *From where do the Protestant sects originate?*

They originate from various men, such as Luther, Calvin, Henry VIII, etc.

9. *Why cannot the Protestant sects also be considered as true churches of Christ?*

The Protestant sects cannot be considered as true churches of Christ because their origin is not from Christ, since they only came into being some fifteen hundred years or so after Christ had ended His earthly ministry.

10. *How can we prove that the Spirit of Truth does not abide in the Protestant sects?*

This is clear from their teachings which keep on changing with the times and vary from sect to sect, with the result that nowadays the number of Protestant sects is almost infinite.

11. *What is the principal difference between the Catholics and the Protestants?*

The principal difference lies in the fact that the Catholics, in accordance with Christ's commandment, derive their faith from the Teaching Church, whereas the Protestants, according to their own fundamental principle, have to derive it from their own reading and their own private interpretation of the Bible.

12. *Are all men bound to become members of the Catholic Church?*

Yes, they are; since Christ has ordained it and has instituted His Church in order to provide all men with the means of salvation.

13. *Can no Protestant be saved except that he become a member of the Catholic Church?*

Only those Protestants who have discovered the True Church endanger their eternal salvation, if they refuse to join it.

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