

# Revision Booklet



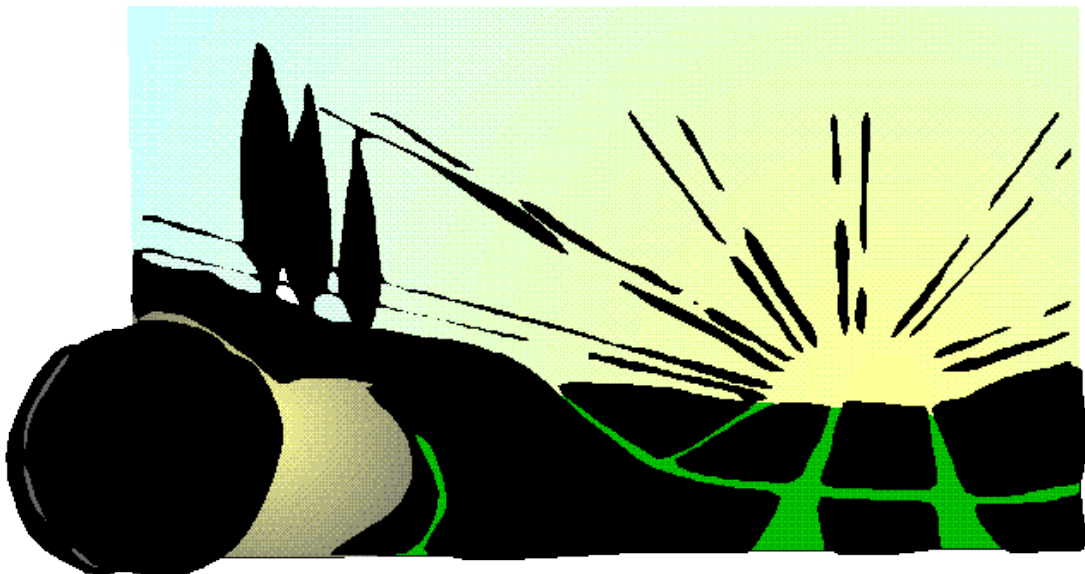
**GCSE Religious Studies**

**Applied Catholic Theology**

## **Component 2**

**Theme 3:**

**Life and Death**



# Theme 3: LIFE AND DEATH

Key Concepts	
<b>Death</b>	the end of physical life. When the physical body ceases completely to function.
<b>Eternal Life</b>	the term used to refer to life in heaven after death. Also, the phrase Jesus uses to describe a state of living as God intends which leads to this life in heaven
<b>Heaven</b>	those who have accepted God's grace and forgiveness in this life will enjoy an eternal existence in God's presence in the next life. This face to face encounter with God is what we call "Heaven".
<b>Hell</b>	those who through the exercise of their own free will ultimately reject God's grace and forgiveness, will have chosen to live eternally outside of God's presence. This total lack of God for all eternity is what we call "Hell".
<b>Judgement</b>	at the end of our life, we will be faced with an ultimate choice to choose God or reject God. The decision we take leads to judgement and decides whether we 'go' to Heaven or Hell.
<b>Magisterium</b>	the teaching authority of the Church, exercised by the bishops in communion with the Pope. The magisterium is given grace by the Holy Spirit to faithfully interpret the Scriptures and Tradition.
<b>Resurrection</b>	the raising of the body to life again after death. Christians believe that Jesus has already experienced resurrection and that all people will experience it at the end of time.
<b>Soul</b>	the eternal part of a human being given at conception which lives on after the death of the body. Also a name for a human being's rational nature - their mind.

## Catholic beliefs about death

**Death** is part of human experience. Religious believers want to support those approaching death and to those who are grieving the death of family or friends. Catholics believe that when we die life is 'changed not ended':

*"flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will be changed." (1 Cor 15:50-51)*

*"Where, O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?" (1Cor 15:55)*

Catholic teaching on death only makes sense when we understand Catholic belief in **Eternal Life**.

For Catholics, it is important to help those who are dying to:

- **prepare themselves to die well** - spending time with family, reduce worry about money and inheritance, perhaps discuss their funeral, making peace with family or friends. Possibly will include palliative care to reduce pain.
- **to respect the integral value of their lives until their natural death** - Catholic Church rejects Euthanasia or Assisted Suicide. Instead they promote hospices that provide palliative care when treatment to cure a medical condition is no longer possible.
- **to provide rituals and liturgies to support the grieving** - the funeral rite includes imagery and symbols that reflect belief and hope in eternal life

## Palliative Care

**Palliative care aims to control pain.** Medication reduces pain and enables people to have as much dignity and quality of life as possible.

**Hospices** are guided by doctors to provide pain relieving medication, nursing care, supervision and practical help until natural death occurs.

The **Catholic Church**, along with many other Christians, many people of other religious traditions and those with no religion belief at all, **support those who provide such palliative care** because it **respects the integral value of every person until their natural death.**



## Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

**Euthanasia:** The term means a 'good' or 'gentle' death.

A medical professional gives medication to end the life of a person with a terminal illness.

Euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands but illegal in UK

**Assisted Suicide:** Someone asks for help to end their own life in a pain free/reduced process.

The Catholic Church says these deliberate actions to end a life are wrong.

"... I confirm that euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person."

(Evangelium Vitae - Pope St John Paul II)

This is because of the Catholic belief that all human life is sacred/holy.

Sanctity of life = life is a gift from God.

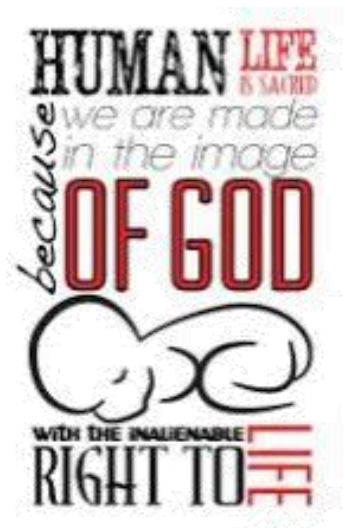
Life is precious and should be respected from conception to natural death.

Deliberate and unjustified killing, such as euthanasia and assisted suicide, are seen as going against that sanctify of life and against the instruction in the Ten Commandments - 'Do not murder'.

There are alternatives available through palliative care.

Also, Catholics believe that suffering has a purpose:

- helping us to learn about ourselves and others
- to understand what it means to be human.



## Is there a right to die?

Beliefs about euthanasia & assisted suicide are based on two things:

1. sanctity of life - the belief that life is a gift from God
2. quality of life - the idea that life has to have some benefits to be worth living

Catholics believe that all human life, however fragile or vulnerable, has value. Palliative care that supports human dignity is acceptable, while euthanasia and assisted suicide are not.

Many other religious people agree. e.g. Judaism & Islam.

However, some religious people **believe euthanasia might be right in some circumstances**. e.g. some liberal Christians say it might be the most loving thing to do. Jesus' said 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. They argue that truly loving others would allow euthanasia if someone is in pain.

*A 'right to die' argument:*

The **British Humanist Association (BHA)** (a non-religious group) says it is a **matter of personal choice**. Legalised assisted dying would make sure people are free to make their own choices about their end-of-life care.

In 2012, the BHA supported Tony Bland's challenge to UK law. He had 'locked-in syndrome', so unable to move or speak. He asked for the right to be able to choose an assisted death and felt that the law condemned him to live with increasing indignity and misery. Diane Pretty also asked the courts to allow her husband to take her to a 'Dignitas' clinic in Switzerland. Both of these people died without changes in UK law.

Euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands and a few other countries.

Assisted suicide is legally permitted in Switzerland and some states in the USA.

In UK it is illegal, but it is unlikely that someone would be prosecuted for helping someone travel to Switzerland for assisted suicide.

## The Catholic Church, and others, reject the arguments in favour of right to die:

- **Slippery slope argument:** Is it really possible to protect people who may be feeling pressurised to accept euthanasia or assisted suicide? 'Not Dead Yet', a non-religious disabled people's pressure group, fear it gives a message that we do not value life if it is 'imperfect'.
- **Quality of life:** Lots of people live fruitful and valuable lives despite the difficult circumstances they find themselves in.
- **Who decides 'quality of life':** Daniel James was paralysed from the waist down after a rugby injury. He sought assisted suicide because he could not come to terms with what he felt to be a diminished quality of life. On the other hand, many people live productive and valuable lives despite such paralysis. Doctors should help us, not kill us.
- **Do Not Resuscitate (DNR):** This is not the same as supporting euthanasia or assisted suicide. Deciding not to resuscitate a person may be respecting their dignity and value if they would suffer as a result, so many religious people support DNR decisions.
- **Doctrine of double effect:** if someone receives pain relief which causes a shortening of life this is not regarded as euthanasia - the intention is to remove pain, not kill.



## The Resurrection

*" if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."  
(1 Corinthians 15:12-14)*

The **Resurrection of Jesus is an essential part of Christian belief.**

Each of the four Gospels speak of the empty tomb, Jesus ' resurrection and tell of events where the apostles met the 'risen' Jesus.

This led them to proclaim a new message; **that Jesus had risen from that dead and that this was a resurrection of the body.**

**The apostles are the witnesses to the truth of this claim.**

St Paul's extraordinary encounter with Jesus reinforced the belief in the resurrection of Jesus:

*"For what I received I passed onto you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also..."* (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

**Jesus' bodily resurrection is promised to everyone because Jesus has defeated sin and death and we share Jesus' resurrection.**



St Paul explains by making a distinction between earthly bodies and heavenly bodies. eg a grain of wheat is different to the fully grown plant - there's a difference between earthly, physical bodies and heavenly, spiritual bodies.

*"So it will be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body, If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."* (1Cor 15:42-45)

## The Soul

St Paul's understanding of the Soul explains what resurrection means.

Jesus' body was not simply revived.

Humans are more than physical bodies - there is something more to being human; this is the soul.

Paul also didn't believe that eternal life was for 'disembodied' souls.

It is not possible to understand what it means to be human without a body.

St Paul says -our **earthly, physical** identity is **both body and soul**.

-our **heavenly, spiritual** bodies are **both body and soul**.

## Did Jesus really rise from the dead?

Belief in the resurrection would be weakened if it was proved that Jesus did not rise from the dead. How do Christians answer the questions?

➤ **Jesus' body was stolen:**

**Q:** *Did Romans or some others steal the body? - to reduce the chance of Jesus' followers making extraordinary claims about him.*

**A:** why did the disciples not present Jesus body when the Apostles started preaching that Jesus had risen from the dead?

**Q:** *Did the Apostles themselves steal Jesus' body?*

**A:** why would they have risked their own lives for something they knew to be untrue. The Gospel accounts emphasise that the tomb was guarded to protect it from robbery.

➤ **Jesus was revived:**

**Q:** *Jesus did not really die at all. He was given pain relief and just seemed dead. The women just revived him when they went to the tomb.*

**A:** why are there no stories about Jesus' life and death in the years that followed?

The resurrection of Jesus remains a matter of faith.

**RCs believe in the Resurrection.**

It **cannot be proved** beyond all doubt but then **it can't be disproved either**.





## What are the other ideas about the soul and life after death?

- **The Material Body:** we are just our physical bodies. There is no soul or spirit. Our sense of self is found in thoughts, memories and experiences that have a physical explanation through growing understanding of how our brains work. Most non-religious people believe this.
- **The Soul:** The spiritual aspect of being; that which connects someone to God. The Soul is thought of as non-physical and as living on after physical death, in an afterlife. Hindus and Sikhs believe that the 'soul' is reincarnated in to a new body after death and born again.
  - some people say there is **evidence of reincarnation** through memories of past lives.
  - others talk of the phenomenon of '**near-death experiences**' (NDE), where they have temporarily separated from their physical bodies, often during traumatic events such as accidents and medical procedures.

## SUMMARY

- Death is not the end; Christians believe there is an eternal life after death
- Catholics do not accept euthanasia or assisted suicide; they believe there are alternatives
- There are many different opinions about whether people should have the right to end their own lives
- Due to Jesus' bodily resurrection, Catholics believe that the soul and the body are resurrected
- There are different opinions about Jesus' resurrection and about what happens to us when we die.



## BELIEFS ABOUT ESCHATOLOGY

Eschatology: study of the 'last things' - Death, Judgement, Heaven & Hell.

### Judgement

Catholic Christians believe that each individual will be held to account for the thing they do, or fail to do, during our lives.

Jesus told stories about judgement:

- **the parable of The Unforgiving Servant:** a man who owes money to the king. Fearing being put in debtors' prison, he begs for mercy. He receives mercy but later refuses to show mercy to a man who owes him money. The king puts the first man in prison until he pays what he owes:

*'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother and sister from your heart' (Matthew 18:35)*

- **the parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus:** a rich man ignored a beggar named Lazarus, who sat outside his house. Lazarus would beg while the rich man enjoyed his luxuries. After death, Lazarus is taken to be with God, while the rich man has an eternal life of 'torment'. The rich man asks for some comfort, but he is reminded;

*"Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony." (Luke 16:19-31)*

- **the parable of The Sheep and the Goats:** the good people (sheep) will be rewarded with heaven because they fed the hungry gave drink to the thirsty, provided shelter for the homeless etc;

*"Whenever you did this for the least of these, you did for me" (Matt 25:40)*



## Heaven

Those who have accepted God's grace and forgiveness in this life will enjoy eternal existence in God's presence in the next life - in heaven!



**Heaven is indescribable** - 'up there', the 'presence of God', 'glorious splendour'; the 'beatific vision'; a 'transcendent place'; and the imagery of 'clouds' and 'harp playing angels', all try to help us understand a belief in **eternal happiness** in the **presence of God**.

## Hell

Those who reject God's grace and forgiveness have chosen to live eternally outside of God's presence.

The two parables (*The Unforgiving Servant* and *The Rich Man and Lazarus*) demonstrate that it is **the free choice** to exclude themselves from God that led to the consequences of punishment. It is not that God chooses to punish.

**Hell is indescribable** - imagery of fire and torture have been used by artists, writers and poets to explore the idea of being separated from God for eternity.



## Purgatory

This term comes from a word meaning '**to purge**' - It means **to cleanse** or **get rid of sins**.

We need to be perfect to be in God's presence. No one is perfect - so purgatory is about having another chance to get to heaven.

Some art and literature presents Purgatory as a place with fire. This is because the Greek root word for fire is 'pur' and refers to the ancient practice of burning land in an attempt to cleanse it. St Paul uses the same imagery in his first letter to the Christians in Corinth:

*"It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward."*

(1 Corinthians 3:13)

Although useful for artists, it is not very helpful to see Purgatory as some sort of place half-way between heaven and hell. The idea behind purgatory is **hope** - hope that we can be with God forever.

This is why, in the Catholic tradition, **people pray for those who have died.**

**Praying for the dead is to join with them in that hope for eternal life.**

## Other Christian views on Judgement

Catholics believe everyone is responsible for their own actions and this is what will be judged.

Jesus also talked about a 'final judgement': Jesus will come in glory at the end of time and all creation will be judged. eg **Parable of the Sheep and the Goats** (Matt 25:31-46) and in the **Book of Revelation**.

**Some Christians, such as Anglicans, do not accept the idea of Purgatory.**

- ✓ people either accept God and are in a state of grace with God, or they reject God.

**Some Christians put the emphasis on a final judgement** at the end of time, rather than an individual judgement.

- ✓ Christ will come in glory on the last day for a final day of judgement.

## SUMMARY

- 'Eschatology' describes Christian ideas about what will happen at the 'end times'
- Catholics believe in personal judgement; God will judge everyone on the basis of how they have lived their lives
- 'Heaven' is being in the presence of God for eternity and 'Hell' is the absence of God for eternity.
- Purgatory is the Catholic idea that, after death, people will be cleansed of sin before they can enter heaven
- Other Christians hold different beliefs about judgement and about Purgatory

# THE MAGISTERIUM

The **Catholic Church has three sources of authority** to support its teaching:

1. **The Bible** as the Word of God is the primary source for all Christians.

It is inspired by the Holy Spirit who continues to work.



2. **The 'Tradition'**: theologians' explanations of beliefs to the community



3. **The 'Magisterium'**: teaching of the leaders of the Church (popes and bishops)

The Latin word 'magister' means a 'master' or 'teacher'. Jesus gave the apostles authority to preach. The Pope and bishops can trace their appointment back to the first apostles. This is called the **Apostolic Succession**.

- i. **Ordinary Magisterium**: teaching of Pope & bishops given in homilies and letters. The Pope's letters are called 'encyclicals'. The Magisterium applies Catholic teaching to issues that were not considered by the writers of the Bible (IVF, genetic engineering). The authority of the Magisterium gives us confidence that we're following what Jesus would have said.
- ii. **Extraordinary Magisterium**: Sometimes the bishops of the Church are asked to sit in a General Council. The first record of such a council is in the Bible (Acts 15) when the first Christian leaders gathered in Jerusalem to decide how people could convert to Christianity. The decisions of the Council of Nicea resulted in the Nicene Creed, which is still said in churches on Sundays.
- iii. **Pontifical Magisterium**: Another form of 'extraordinary magisterium' - called ex cathedra declarations. Before making such declarations, the Pope consults widely, has discussions with advisers and spends time in prayer. An ex cathedra statement the teaching is considered to be without error (infallible).

*It is important to note that this papal infallibility is limited to faith and morals and use of **this form of extraordinary magisterium is very rare**. There have only ever been two; in 1854 Pope Pius IX defined the doctrine of the **Immaculate Conception of Mary**. Then, in 1950 Pope Pius XII defined the doctrine of the **Assumption of Mary into heaven**.*

## Second Vatican Council

'Second Vatican Council' (Vatican II): most recent General Council held in 1960s.  
(second one to be held at the Vatican, in Rome)

It was called by Pope St John XXIII on 11th October 1962 and completed its work under Pope Paul VI on 8th December 1965.

**Context:** WWII ended in 1945. There was considerable change in society, technology and in politics. John XXIII wanted the Catholic Church to respond to these changes and to re-present the faith in this new context.

The Council published 16 documents. After the Council, Pope Paul established a process for bishops to gather in smaller sessions, called synods. eg in 2015 there was a special synod on the family.



## The Four Key Documents: Constitution

The **four most important documents** of Vatican II were given the title of '**Constitution**'. These have been guiding the Catholic Church since 1965.

- i. **Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation):** This document sets out the **relationship between the Bible, Tradition and the Magisterium**. Explains **each are inspired by the Holy Spirit** and **have authority** for the Catholic Church. Emphasis on proper biblical scholarship very important- many Catholics at the time didn't understand the variety of the literary styles within the Bible or the influence of the historical context on the Bible writers. Encouraged Catholics to use the Bible as part of their prayer life. Has led to an increase in specialist biblical scholars and more Bible study groups in parishes.



- ii. **Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy): reformed the Church's liturgy.** Before the Council Mass was said in Latin. Everyone faced the altar to emphasise the act of sacrifice. Because of Vatican II the **people are now more involved**, have better understanding of the symbolism and **are able to understand the Mass**. The words were translated into the local language and the altar moved so that the priest now faces the people. Also, the lectionary has been revised so that Catholics get a richer and wider selection of Bible readings at church.



- iii. **Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church):** This is about **the nature and work of the Church**. Lumen Gentium, with means 'the light of the peoples', says **all the people of the Church are important**, not just the priests. All are called to serve Jesus; to live out their baptismal promises to be 'lights to the world'; to be of service to others. In this way, the Church is a 'sacrament' revealing God's love to the world.



- iv. **Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World):** written to **encourage the people of faith to engage with the modern world and get involved in issues of social justice**. That is how Catholics can be sources of 'joy and hope' in the modern world. Set out principles of justice and peace that later enabled CAFOD to be set up. Since Vatican II, dioceses and parishes have set up Justice and Peace Groups, international organisations like Pax Christi have been created and national organisations, such as Catholic Association for Racial Justice, have developed.

**CAFOD**  
Just one world

**PAX**  
**CHRISTI**  
INTERNATIONAL

## SUMMARY

- Catholics use the Bible, Tradition and Magisterium as sources of authority
- Magisterium can be 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary'.
- 'Pontifical Magisterium' are rare, but Catholics believe these teachings to be infallible (without error/mistake)
- The last Extraordinary Magisterium was the Second Vatican Council which led to many significant changes and developments

## ARTEFACTS

Humans often use imagery to help explore ideas and to find ways of expressing beliefs. Catholic artefacts express beliefs about death, resurrection and eternal life.

### Sarcophagi

These are stone coffins that have carved images on them. The images often feature scenes from the Bible, or the lives of saints.

One example is the 4th Century Sarcophagus with Scenes of Jesus' Passion that is now in the Museo Pio Cristiano in the Vatican, Rome. **The entire decoration is based on the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus** - its images reinforce the belief that **Jesus' death and resurrection was a triumph over sin and a sign of hope.**



- ✓ On one panel there is the scene of Simon of Cyrene carrying the cross.
- ✓ The next panel shows Jesus being given the crown of thorns. The contrast between the suffering of Jesus and the triumph over sin is indicated by the style of crown. It is now longer simply a crown of thorns but a jewel-filled crown.
- ✓ Another panel shows the trial before Pilate.
- ✓ Next to it is the scene of Pilate washing his hands.
- ✓ For the centre piece there is a formalised cross with the 'Chi-Rho' symbol representing Jesus. The Chi-Rho is an ancient symbol of the resurrection. The title 'Christ' means the anointed/chosen one. Jesus is the one who was anointed/chosen to save people from sin through his death and resurrection. The Chi-Rho is formed from the first two letters of the title 'Christ' in Greek. (Chi = X, Rho = P) = 'Chi-Rho'. To reinforce the theme of victory, the Chi-Rho is placed within a wreath that is held in the beaks of two eagles. The wreath is the Roman symbol of victory. The eagles represent God because in Roman religion they were used to represent the God Jupiter. This cross sits prominently above two soldiers sitting in awe at the symbols of resurrection.



## The Paschal Candle

In the liturgical life of the Church it is the Easter (or Paschal) Candle that is most visibly used to present the **triumph of the Resurrection**. Each year during Holy Week the events of the last week of Jesus' life feature in a series of liturgies. There are **three** that form the 'Triduum':

1. **Holy Thursday**: Mass of the Last Supper
2. **Good Friday**: Commemoration of the Crucifixion
3. **Easter Vigil**: The Resurrection

At the beginning of the **Easter Vigil** the church is in darkness. The Easter (Paschal) Candle is lit from that fire and processed into the church. **The light of Christ fills and overcomes the darkness of sin**. The procession is completed with an ancient hymn, called the Exsultet, that proclaims Christ's triumph over sin because his resurrection defeats death.

The candle itself has symbols on it to reinforce belief in this triumph over sin:

**The year:** Each year the candle is marked with that particular year. It reminds people that Jesus is the same for all time and that the salvation earned by Jesus is as real now as it was in the past. That candle is to be used by the Church for that year, especially at baptisms.



**The Five Wounds:** The candle has five studs on it to represent the five wounds Jesus received during his crucifixion. Jesus took on sin and triumphed over sin through the resurrection.

**The 'Alpha' & 'Omega':** the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. They symbolise Christ as the 'first' and the 'last'; the 'beginning' of all things and the 'end' of all things.

**The Cross:** the symbol of Christian faith because it is due to the crucifixion of Christ that the resurrection was possible. Also an acknowledgement that the events of Good Friday did not end but were completed by the resurrection.

The Easter Candle has a prominent place in the Church throughout the Easter Season. As a reminder of the triumph of the resurrection the Easter Candle is lit at every Mass from Easter Sunday through to Pentecost.

## The Easter Candle and Baptism

Historically, baptisms took place at the Easter Vigil. Many parishes still baptise adults during the Easter Vigil.

Baptism is the sacrament of entry into the Church. Water is used to symbolise that sin is washed away by Jesus. The water to be used to baptise the new Christians during the Easter Vigil is blessed using the Easter Candle.

The Easter Candle features in baptisms throughout the year.:

- ✓ To remind the people of the resurrection, it is lit and placed near to the font.
- ✓ A smaller baptismal candle is lit from its flame and is given to the baptised person or their family to remind them that the 'Light of Christ' has defeated the darkness of sin.
- ✓ The liturgy encourages them to keep the light of faith 'burning brightly'.
- ✓ priests are asked to celebrate baptisms on Sundays if possible. This is because Sunday is the weekly reminder of the celebration of the passion and resurrection of Christ.



## SUMMARY

- The Sarcophagus with Scenes of the Passion conveys Christian beliefs about eternal life through the images of Jesus' crucifixion carved on the panels and the 'Chi-Rho' inscribed on it.
- The paschal candle conveys Christian beliefs that the resurrection brought light and hope to humankind. The symbols on it are a reminder of the crucifixion through which Jesus brought salvation
- The paschal candle is used at Easter (the festival that remembers the crucifixion) and at baptisms as a reminder that 'the light of the world' has defeated death and sin and salvation is possible

## Forms of Expression - Music

### Prayer can be enhanced by music:

- ✓ Music leads people into expressions and feelings that are not always words alone.
- ✓ Recorded music can help with quiet adoration or thanksgiving prayers.
- ✓ Live music can help a community bring their prayers together.

## The Psalms

In the Old Testament, the **Psalms are ancient collections of prayers and hymns to God**. They express emotions from **joy and praise, to anxiety and despair**. Jesus and the first Christians would have used the psalms as they had lived most of their lives as part of the Jewish community.

The daily prayers of religious communities of monks and nuns are based around prayer from the Psalms. Gradually they developed ways of singing or chanting the Psalms to add to the beauty of the prayers. The most famous of those styles is known as 'Gregorian chant'. This plainsong doesn't need accompanying musicians.

At the Catholic Mass the **Liturgy of the Word includes a Psalm**. This is selected to respond in prayer to the main theme in the first reading. Parishes are encouraged to sing the Psalm where possible and many have been set to music by modern composers. Plainsong/chant versions are also available.



## Music in the liturgy

The Catholic Mass has several elements which are appropriate to sing:

**Alleluia:** This is a chant for welcoming the Gospel. To acknowledge the importance of listening to the teaching of the Gospel, the Alleluia should be sung where possible.

**Eucharistic Acclamations:** These are the chants that the congregation says/sings during the Liturgy of the Eucharist:

- 'Holy, Holy',
- 'Memorial Acclamations'
- 'Great Amen'.



They punctuate the great prayer of thanksgiving at which the bread and wine become the 'body and blood of Christ'. Marking these moments with sung responses **highlights the solemnity and importance of that moment** in the Mass.

**The Gloria:** This is a great song of praise. The words can bring a greater sense joy or awe/wonder through music.

**Hymns:** Many parishes use hymns for the gathering at the start of Mass and for the end of Mass. Hymns can support quiet prayer at the distribution of Communion. Hymns are also used at the procession of the gifts of bread and wine before the Eucharistic Prayer.

## Ancient or Modern?

- ❖ Some Catholics would say that traditional Latin music is the best way to appreciate the beauty and majesty of the liturgy.
- ❖ Others would say that the older hymns are more appropriate church music and the words of the classic hymn writers are more poetic.
- ❖ Yet others would say that the church needs to sing in the style of the younger generation, otherwise it is not speaking to them at all.

## Catholic beliefs about eternal life: Faure's 'Requiem'

'It has been said that my Requiem does not express the fear of death and someone has called it a lullaby of death. But it is thus that I see death: as a happy deliverance, an aspiration towards happiness above, rather than as a painful experience'.

(Gabriel Faure)

Music composed for funerals = 'requiem', which is from the Latin for 'rest'.

- ✓ Gabriel Faure (1845-1924) composed a requiem full of beautiful melodies.
- ✓ Written just after the death of his Father and first performed just before the death of his Mother, the requiem brings a **sense of serenity, calm and peace**.
- ✓ this music **acknowledges grief** within the context of the **hope of eternal life**.
- ✓ Faure does not allow the natural sadness of grief to obscure faith in the resurrection.
- ✓ He said that he did not want to express a fear of death. Instead he presented a requiem that focused on the **aspiration of heaven** by using harps, violins and the sound of angelic sopranos.
- ✓ The In Paradisum is a prayer that asks for the deceased to be welcomed into paradise. Faure's music highlights that faithful hope. The gentleness of the music conveys a final tranquillity as life's trials are left behind and the music rises and soars before fading. The music of this section is lighter and more ethereal in nature than previous sections, and is underpinned by a steady, rhythmic beat. The choir sings in a higher pitch, sounding like the angels in heaven.
- ✓ Like the symbols and symbolic actions in the funeral, **Faure's music helps the grieving to have faith, comfort and hope**. It does not focus on the morbid, but on the restful and fear-free nature of death.
- ✓ In contrast, Verdi's Requiem 'Dies Irae' ('Day of Wrath') has loud, violent music that changes rapidly and conveys restlessness. The singing sounds like wailing and it is very far from conveying the sense of calm and tranquillity in Faure's composition.
- ✓ Faure himself said '...my Requiem is dominated from beginning to end by a very human feeling of faith in eternal rest.'

## The Catholic funeral rite

The funeral rite has a variety of symbols and actions that remind the family and friends of the deceased person of faith in the resurrection.

The purpose is:

- to enable the family to acknowledge their grief,
- to celebrate the love they have for the deceased and
- to find comfort in the hope of eternal life.

## Symbols on the coffin

- ❖ **The coffin is covered in a white cloth, called a Pall:** a reminder of Baptism when the newly baptised is presented with a white garment as a symbol of being washed clean of sin. Sin separates humans from God. The waters of Baptism are a symbol of being made clean of sin and the Pall is the reminder that, because of Jesus, sin and death have been defeated. Also a reminder that everyone is equal in the eyes of God. Everyone is worthy of salvation through Christ.
- ❖ **The book of the Gospels is sometimes placed on the coffin:** reminds people that Christians live by the Gospel and that faithfulness to Christ's teachings leads to eternal life.
- ❖ **A cross is often placed on the coffin.** The Baptismal rite includes the priest or deacon making the sign of the cross on the person to mark their joining the Christian community. It is through the cross and resurrection that people are saved and can now be sure that death has been defeated by Christ.  
*"In baptism, (name) received the sign of the cross. May he/she now share in Christ's victory over death."*
- ❖ **The Paschal Candle** is often placed beside the coffin as a symbol of belief in the resurrection.
- ❖ Flowers may be placed on the coffin but in moderation, so that they do not hide these important symbols of faith and hope.

## Symbolic Actions

- ❖ At the beginning and end of the funeral the coffin is **sprinkled with holy water**. The coffin is also sprinkled with holy water before being buried or cremated. Once again this is a reminder of the waters of Baptism and the gift of eternal life. The accompanying prayer is *"In the waters of baptism, (name) died with Christ and rose with him to new life. May he/she now share with him eternal glory"*.
- ❖ At the end of the funeral **the coffin is incensed** as a sign of honouring the person, whose body was a temple of the Holy Spirit. The incense also signifies the prayers of those gathered rising up to God.
- ❖ **Processions** are a traditional way of acknowledging importance. It is common for the coffin to be carried out of the church in a solemn procession. It brings the community together to show the grieving relatives and friends that all present are in solidarity with them.



## Prayers and Readings

- ✓ The readings will be chosen to remind people of the promise of resurrection and eternal life.
- ✓ Those readings will be a source of comfort for those grieving and a declaration of hope.
- ✓ The prayers throughout the funeral will refer to Baptism, to Easter and the Resurrection, to the sacrifice on the cross and the hope of eternal life.
- ✓ The priest or deacon will use their homily (sermon) to explain the Christian belief that death has been defeated and the Church community has sure and firm hope of eternal life. This should bring further comfort to the family and friends.
- ✓ The prayers of intercession will include prayers for the deceased, for the grieving family and friends and for the wider community.
- ✓ Although not a requirement of the funeral rite, many funerals in Catholic churches would include the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This would be particularly appropriate if the deceased or members of the family regularly attended Mass.
- ✓ Some funerals include a short 'eulogy'. This is different to the liturgical homily. This is a where a relative or friend speaks about the life of the deceased person and can be a celebration of their positive contribution to the lives of their family and friends.

## Liturgical Colour & Final Commendation

A priest would most often wear white vestments at a funeral, because white is the liturgical colour of the resurrection.

As with all the elements of the funeral, the purpose is to express Christian hope in the Easter story and faith in eternal life.

Similarly, the prayers of the Final Commendation express that faith with the words:

"May the angels lead you into paradise: may the martyrs come to welcome you and take you to the holy city, the new and eternal Jerusalem".



## SUMMARY

- Different types of music are used in worship, from chanting to using modern instruments such as drums and guitar
- People's opinions about styles of music are different
- 'Requiem' uses serene, calm melodies to convey beliefs about death and eternal life, for example, that the resurrection gives hope and that death is not to be feared. Instruments such as harp and violin and soprano voices give the composition a sense of the 'heavenly'.
- A Catholic funeral uses symbols, prayers and readings to convey beliefs about eternal

## PRAYER WITHIN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) defines prayer as:

*'... the raising of the mind and heart to God, or the petition of good things from him in accord with his will'. (CCC 534).*

Prayer is more than simply asking for something or reciting a well-known familiar prayer. Prayer is about setting aside time to be in the presence of God. Regular prayer can become a habit that deepens a relationship with God.

This is what 'raising the mind and heart to God' can mean for Christians.



Prayer can be different on different occasions:

**Adoration:** when Christians simply acknowledge that God is wonderful and worthy of praise. Such prayer could be to sit silently to worship God. Other times they may use words or songs to express that adoration.

In the Catholic tradition, parishes place the Blessed Sacrament on display for people to pray quietly to adore God present in the Eucharist.



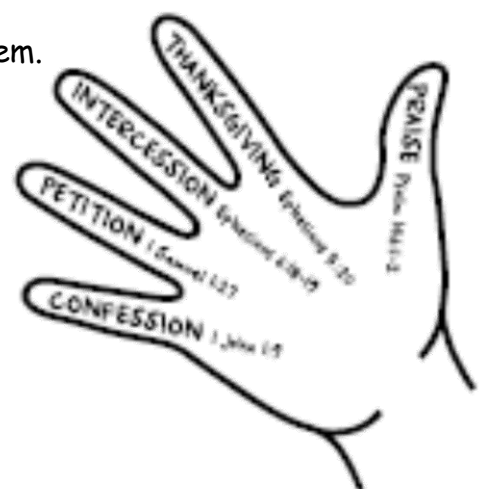
The Catholic practice of starting prayer with the formula 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' is itself an act of prayerful adoration.

**Thanksgiving:** People give thanks for the wonderful things that happen, for answers to prayers and simply for the wonder of creation. For Catholics, the most important act of thanksgiving is the Liturgy of the Eucharist during the Mass. 'Eucharist' is a Greek word that translates as 'thanksgiving'. That part of the Mass is a prayerful thanksgiving for the sacrifice of Jesus in his death and resurrection. That is why the Eucharist is the central action of prayer for the Catholic Church.

**Repentance:** All Christians are human and make mistakes and are sorry for their failure. When they repent Catholics turn away from wrong doing and back towards God. Catholics repent during the penitential rite of the Mass. Catholics can also receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and experience God's forgiveness in a personal way.

**Intercession:** the prayers that ask God to respond to the needs of others.. At every Mass there are Intercessory (or bidding) prayers.

**Petitions:** Individual Christians will ask God to help them. They will 'petition' God to respond to their own needs.



## Formulaic ('set') Prayers

Many Christians like to use the words written down by people who have been close to God. Some of these 'formulaic' prayers are similar to a 'formula', in that the same words are said in the same way every time. They are often very well known and a source of inspiration for many eg *The Lord's Prayer (Our Father)*; *Glory Be*; *the Hail Mary*.

Some formulaic prayers have been extended into techniques to support **reflection or meditation**. There is the tradition of using repeated reciting of simple formula prayers as a way of stilling the mind from distraction and enabling deeper prayer. Eg The 'Jesus' prayer. The person simply repeats the name 'Jesus' or a statement like 'Jesus, I love you'.



**The Rosary** is an example of this technique for Catholics. There is a formula for reciting the most familiar prayers ('Our Father', 'Hail Mary' and 'Glory Be') so that Catholics can meditate on the 'mysteries' of faith.

More complicated use of formulaic prayer is the Liturgy of the Hours. This involves reciting Psalms, Scripture readings, Canticles (songs from the Bible text) and Intercessions at different times of the day. Priests, nuns and monks promise to say these prayers every day. Some lay people join in with part of these prayers when they can.

## The Lord's Prayer

The best known formulaic prayer is the Lord's Prayer (or '**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. Gives 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.*

We can see in this prayer each of the elements mentioned previously:

**Adoration:** Our Father..... hallowed be thy name. To give 'hallows' is to make 'holy'. This prayer starts with a statement of adoration.

**Thanksgiving:** Our Father, who art in heaven ... It is a privilege to call God 'Father'. More than that, the Aramaic version of the term used by Jesus is 'Abba' which is closer to 'daddy'. The creator God is beyond imaginings, Christians are encouraged to have an intimate personal relationship with him. That is something to give thanks for.

**Repentance:** ..forgives us our trespasses.. Christians know we fall short. The prayer invites Christians to repent. Repentance comes with the challenge to forgive others.

**Intercession:** ..Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done... This is a revolutionary prayer! May the world be transformed into the Kingdom of God. May life on earth be as wonderful as being in the presence of God. May there be more peace, more justice, more mutual respect, true equality - and may that be now.

**Petition** .... Give us our daily bread ... deliver from evil.. Christians ask for their own needs.

Some Christians place an additional formula at the end;

*For thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory*

It is found in some, but not all, of the manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel.

## Extempore prayers

The risk of formulaic prayers is that the familiarity of them can become simply repetitive.

Extempore prayer is **when Christians use their own words to speak with God.**

There will be times when the formulas do not express the feelings and wishes of the person. It is possible for people to use their own words to 'raise their hearts and minds to God' in a **more spontaneous way.**

There are some Christians, including some Catholics, who feel so moved by the Holy Spirit that they worship God with unusual sounds. This is called 'charismatic' prayer or praying in 'tongues'.



## Praying for the Dead

Within the Catholic community there is long tradition of praying for the dead.

- ✓ These prayers support the grieving and show our beliefs about salvation, purgatory and the promise of eternal life in heaven.
- ✓ These prayers are intercessions on behalf of the person who has died, asking God to welcome them into His presence.

The most commonly used prayer is:

'Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord. Let perpetual light shine upon him/her. May he/she rest in peace. Amen.

May his/her soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen'.

Another feature of praying for the dead is the practice of asking priests to **offer a mass** for a relative or friend who has died. The priest will remember that person in his own prayers during the Mass. The person's name may be mentioned during the Eucharistic prayer. Within that prayer there is always a formula of words to remember those who have died and a variation that enables an individual to be named.

## SUMMARY

- Prayer is 'the raising of the mind and heart to God'
- Prayers can be 'set' or more spontaneous
- Prayers can have a different purpose, for example, to praise, thank or request
- The Lord's Prayer ('Our Father') was taught by Jesus himself and includes different types of prayer within it
- Catholics believe that their prayers can intercede on behalf of someone who has died and that God can be asked to welcome them in to eternal life.