

Revision Booklet



GCSE Religious Studies

Applied Catholic Theology

Component 2

Theme 4:

Sin and Forgiveness



Theme 4: Sin and Forgiveness

Key Concepts	
Absolutism	the belief that there are certain actions that are always right or always wrong. The belief that moral laws exist eternally and are not just human inventions.
Eucharist	meaning "thanksgiving". The name Catholics use to describe the rite where the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus and is received by the people. Also the name for the real presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.
Evangelisation	literally means spreading the "good news" which we translate as Gospel. The sharing of the Gospel and life of Jesus with others.
Forgiveness	the act of pardoning someone for the offences they have caused you. Overlooking a person's faults.
Punishment	the consequences of a wrong decision and a penalty imposed by a person in authority on the person who has committed wrongdoing.
Relativism	the belief that there is no moral law . Rules that govern what is right and wrong are human inventions and change from place to place and from age to age.
Salvation	the belief that through Jesus' death and resurrection humanity has achieved the possibility of life forever with God.
Sin	Acting against the will or laws of God.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

What is a crime? - *Any offence which goes against the law.*

Laws are made by the government of a country to:

- protect,
- give guidance and
- allow people to live safely without fear.



What is sin? - *An action which goes against the will of God.*

Some sins are crimes eg murder.

Other sins are not against the law eg adultery



Making Moral Decisions

(deciding what's right and wrong)

Deciding what's right and wrong is complex.

Put simply there are two common forms of morality:

Absolute Morality: when a person holds a principle such as "stealing is wrong" and never alters it. This applies to all situations, no matter what the context or circumstance. So even if someone was starving it would not be right for them to steal a loaf of bread. Stealing is always wrong. Another example would be the belief that it is wrong to kill. This would apply in all situations such as war, abortion and euthanasia.

Relative Morality: the idea that a moral principle can be adapted or adjusted in certain situations. So stealing in principle is wrong, but if someone has no other way to get food, then stealing is justifiable. Killing is usually wrong, but if someone kills in self-defence, then it may be acceptable.

AIMS OF PUNISHMENT

A judge will consider several different purposes when sentencing a person for the crime they have committed.

Deterrence: to put someone off committing a crime.

- one of the main arguments for the death penalty. Execution for murder should put others off committing murder. But many argue that it does not work and that people are not really put off by other people's punishment.

Deterrence also has to be just / fair. Punishments should be no harsher than they need to be to put potential criminals off.

-The threat of hanging would probably deter someone from speeding but it would not be fair.

Retribution: punishment should make criminals pay for what they have done wrong - getting even or taking revenge.

Can give the victim of a crime feel a sense of justice that the offender got what they deserved. This goes with the Old Testament idea of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth", but is the opposite of Jesus' teaching that we should 'turn the other cheek' and not look for revenge.



Sometimes victims feel that criminals do not get severe enough punishment, or there is a fear that the punishment could be too harsh.

For Christians, the punishment has to be connected to justice and not revenge.

Rehabilitation: help the offender to see what they have done wrong and to change their behaviour so they do not repeat the offence.

It is the idea that criminals can somehow be 'fixed' if we understand why they commit crimes and help them to change. This may mean providing criminals with education, counselling, skills or training so they can re-join society and avoid breaking the law again.



This is also known as **reform**. It is really the only type of punishment that works in the long term because if criminals are not reformed, they will continue to commit crime when they are released from prison.

Rehabilitation is the aim of punishment which is most in line with Christian ideas on forgiveness .

However, some see it as being soft on criminals and not really a punishment at all.

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is at the **heart of the Gospel message**. Jesus' shows Christians they should treat others with love and forgiveness.



- Peter came to Jesus and asked, *'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?'*
Jesus answered, *'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times'*.
Jesus makes it clear that there's **no limit to forgiveness**.

- In the Our Father Christians ask God to *'forgive their sins, as they forgive those who have sinned against them'*.

Christians can only expect to receive God's forgiveness if they forgive others.

'For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.'
(Matthew 6: 14-15)

There are many other examples from Jesus' life for Christians to follow:

- Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) telling her to *"go and sin no more."*

- The parable of the **Prodigal Son** is one of Jesus' best known stories where the father forgives his son and welcomes him back even though he had done wrong.



- Jesus showed forgiveness in the last moments of his life as he was being put to death. While he was on the cross he says, *"Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."*

Jesus also spoke about justice. He spoke about God's punishment for wrong-doers in the next life. **It is up to God to judge people** and he will forgive those who are truly sorry for what they have done and want to change.

Christians believe that **punishment and forgiveness can go together.**

- The main aim of punishment should be reform.
- People need to look at the motives and reasons for crime.
- We should try to make a better and fairer society where people don't feel the need to, or don't have to turn to, crime.

CATHOLIC TEACHING ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Capital punishment = the death penalty

- Some people think it is a good form of punishment because it deters people from murdering others and takes a life for a life.
- Other people disagree with capital punishment because evidence shows it does not put people off committing crimes, and innocent people can be killed for crimes they did not commit.

The Catholic position on capital punishment has developed over many years.

Traditionally the Church has allowed, but not encouraged capital punishment:

"... the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty (CCC 2267).

- St. Augustine taught that it's important to look for other punishments:
- Pope John Paul II suggested that capital punishment should be avoided unless it is the only way to defend society from the offender: *"If bloodless means are*

sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of persons, public authority must limit itself to such means, because they ... are more in conformity to the dignity of the human person".

- Pope Francis said the death penalty is no longer justifiable and there is also the possibility that the wrong person could be killed.

ARGUMENTS FOR & AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

FOR

- Jesus never taught the death penalty was wrong.
- The Old Testament teaches that the death penalty should be used for some crimes: 'He who sheds a person's blood, shall have his blood shed, for in the image of God humans were made' (Genesis 9:6). 'Life for life, eye for eye' (Exodus 21:24)
- the death penalty upholds the commandment "thou shalt not kill" by showing the seriousness of murder.
- St. Paul teaches that Christians should accept and obey the laws of their country, which might include the death penalty.
- The Catholic Church has not cancelled their statements that capital punishment can be used by the state.
- some crimes are so dreadful that the most extreme form of punishment is justified.
- it is wrong to spend money on keeping someone in prison long term, when that money is needed by others in society.

AGAINST

- Jesus came to save (reform) sinners, but you cannot reform a dead person.
- The commandment says, "Do not kill."
- Jesus said that revenge is wrong. "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also." Matthew 5:38
- Christianity teaches that all life is sacred and that humans are made in God's image. If abortion and euthanasia are wrong, then so is capital punishment. Only God has the right to give and take away life.
- The overall message of Christianity is love and forgiveness and capital punishment goes against this.
- there is always a risk that the wrong person might be executed and that killing a murderer is still killing and 'two wrongs don't make a right'.
- It makes the executioners as bad as the murders

SUMMARY

- ✓ A crime is an offence against the law and a sin is an offence against God.
- ✓ There are several aims of punishment such as retribution, deterrence and rehabilitation.
- ✓ At the heart of the Christian message is forgiveness. Christians should follow Jesus' teaching and example.
- ✓ The Catholic Church has allowed, but not encouraged capital punishment.
- ✓ Some Christians are against the death penalty for such reasons as it goes against the commandment "Do not kill", and there is a risk the wrong person is killed.
- ✓ Some Christians are for the death penalty because, the Church allows it and the Old Testament argues for it.

REDEMPTION

Salvation

Christians believe that:

- Humans sinned and rejected God.
- Humans are so important to God that God the Son became human in the person of Jesus to free humans from the effects of sinfulness.



In Christianity, 'salvation' means being freed from sin and its consequences.

Christianity teaches that Christians can only achieve this by repenting of their sins, asking God for forgiveness, and accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God and saviour of humankind.

Q: How did Jesus' death reconcile God and humans?

A: sacrifice.

eg John the Baptist describes Jesus as 'the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world' (John 1:29). The New Testament uses the Old Testament image of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53:5) and applies it to Jesus

- ✓ In biblical times animal sacrifice common practice. The animal was seen as taking the blame for something it did not do (a 'scape-goat') and the sacrifice was believed to free human beings from the sins they had committed.
- ✓ Christians believe that Jesus' sacrifice made amends for the sins of human beings in a way that other sacrifices could not. This restored God's original relationship with humankind. Human beings could not do this for themselves, as they were sinners.
- ✓ Only the death of Jesus, who was divine, perfect and without sin, could offer redemption.
- ✓ Jesus he 'paid the price' for human sin.
- ✓ He suffered on behalf of all human beings. Christians believe that, in turn, Jesus extends the salvation he earned to all those who believe in him.
- ✓ Christians believe Jesus came to earth to bring us salvation. His death was the sacrifice needed to bring salvation to the world, so Jesus is the saviour of the world.



Grace

Grace is God's love and mercy. We don't deserve it - it's a free gift from God.





Catholics believe we receive grace through the sacraments

Salvation comes to the world today through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, reconciliation and the eucharist.

As a result of receiving these sacraments, Catholics want to try harder to live a Christian life - and receive the help to do so.

The importance of grace and salvation for Catholics

Salvation from sin is important because it gives us life with God.

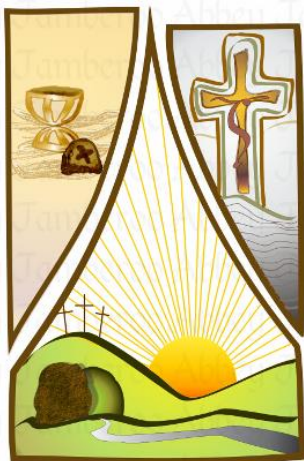
- without it sin will stop us from having a relationship with God (and ultimately might mean hell or purgatory after we die).

The salvation of humankind was the purpose of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Jesus is the saviour of the world for Christians. Christians believe they do not deserve this but are given it freely by God. It's up to us to accept salvation.

Salvation is important for Catholics because it explains why the sacraments of baptism, reconciliation, confirmation, healing and the eucharist are at the heart of Catholic life.



The Paschal Mystery



The Paschal (Easter) Mystery is one of the central concepts of Christian faith. It is how Jesus offers salvation to all.

It refers to the last few days of Jesus' life, his death, resurrection and ascension (he was then taken from earth to be with God)

The last few days of Jesus' life are remembered during Holy Week, the week running up to Easter Sunday

The suffering that Jesus went through at this time is traditionally called the Passion (from a Latin word meaning 'suffering').



The Last Supper



- the meal that Jesus had with his disciples on the evening before he was arrested.
 - Jesus gave his disciples two symbols, in the form of bread and wine, to be used in remembrance of him.
 - The bread represented Jesus' body, which was to be sacrificed on behalf of all human beings, and the wine his blood.
- The events of the Last Supper are also remembered on Maundy Thursday, which takes place on the Thursday of Holy Week.

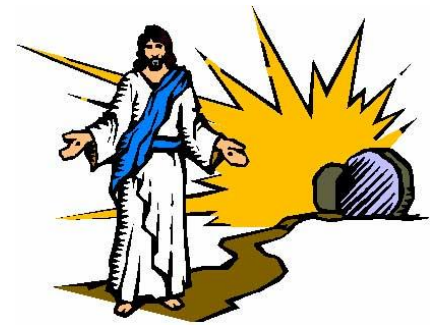
Today, the symbols of bread and wine are an important part of Christian worship in a ceremony known as the Eucharist (or Mass, as Catholics call it).

Good Friday and Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion

- after the Last Supper, Jesus went with his disciples to a garden called Gethsemane, where he prayed.
- This was a time of great sorrow and torment. Christians refer to the hours Jesus spent at Gethsemane as the 'agony in the garden'.
- He was arrested there after one of his disciples, Judas, told the authorities where to find him.
- Jesus was tried by the Sanhedrin (the Jewish religious leaders and authorities). He was found guilty of blasphemy, the crime of either insulting God or pretending to be God. In ancient Jewish society, the punishment for blasphemy was death.
- Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect who was then in charge of the city of Jerusalem, sentenced Jesus to be whipped and crucified. Roman soldiers then mocked and beat Jesus before leading him away to be crucified.



Christians commemorate Jesus' crucifixion and death on Good Friday, the Friday of Holy Week, and treat it as a day of mourning for his death. Christians believe that Jesus' death, ultimately had good consequences for human beings. Christians believe that Jesus' suffering and death were part of God's plan, which can only be understood within the context of Jesus' resurrection after his death.



The resurrection and its significance for Christians

The gospels record that after Jesus died on the cross, his body was buried, but he rose from the dead three days later.

The resurrection is the central belief of Christianity and lies at the heart of the Christian faith.

- Jesus' ability to overcome death proved he was the Son of God
- It confirms belief in the Trinity and an omnipotent (all powerful) God who holds ultimate power over the universe, because only the creator of life could resurrect life after death.
- the resurrection shows that Jesus is our saviour. He has the power to help anyone who believes in him to overcome death. Jesus gives the gift of eternal life with God.

The ascension and the promise of the Holy Spirit

The gospels' account of Jesus' ascension tells how the disciples saw Jesus taken up into heaven 40 days after his resurrection.

- it is the end of Jesus' time on earth. He had completed everything God the Father had intended him to do and could therefore return to heaven to prepare a place for his followers.
- Jesus' ascension prepared the way for the Holy Spirit to come to earth, as Jesus had promised at the Last Supper.



Hell and the concept of a loving God

God does not send anyone to hell.

Humans have free will and must choose how to spend their life.

If a person chooses to do evil then they will be far from God no matter how much God wants them to come to him.

God's love is unconditional but he cannot force it upon us, we have to accept it.

Hell is not a punishment, but a consequence of choosing to go against God.

We choose our eternal destination by our choices through life.

The concept of free will means that God can only offer salvation; it is up to the individual to accept that offer.



SUMMARY

- ✓ Humans have rejected God by their sinfulness, but Jesus offers salvation and redemption
- ✓ Christians believe that their relationship with God and their salvation, depends on Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension
- ✓ This is a freely given gift offered through God's grace and cannot be earned
- ✓ God is all loving and merciful but it is human free will that chooses to reject God which leads to hell



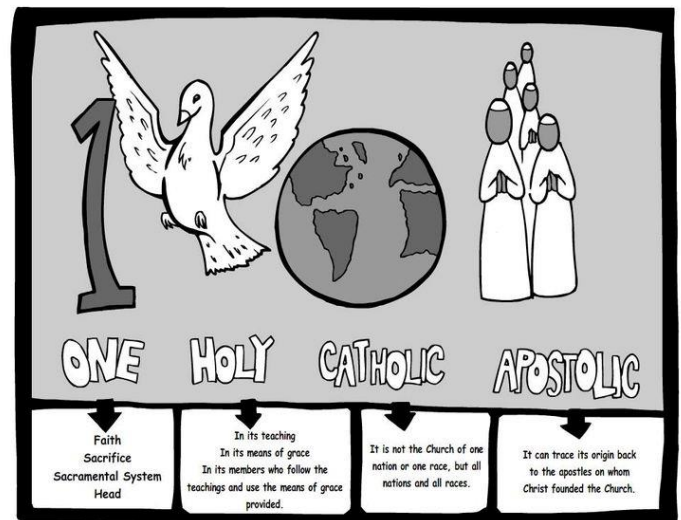
CHURCH

The nature of the Church:

The Nicene Creed identifies four marks, or distinguishing qualities, of the Church.

The 'four marks' of the Church are that it is:

1. **one**,
2. **holy**,
3. **catholic**, and
4. **apostolic**.



1. One

The Church is one. The Catechism says the Church is one for three reasons:

- because it comes from the Holy Trinity, a perfect **unity** of three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- because of its founder, Jesus Christ, who came to **unite** all humankind through his death on the cross
- because of its 'soul', the Holy Spirit, who lives in all members of the Church and **unites** everyone into one communion of believers, and who guides the Church.

We can see the 'oneness' of the Church. Catholics are united in the Creed, the prayer which sums up what Catholics believe, the other teachings and the celebration of the sacraments, eg wherever you go to Mass in the world, the Mass is always the same.

'One' doesn't mean that everything should be exactly the same everywhere you go. In the Church's oneness, there is diversity: there is room for many different types of people with many different gifts, but who work together to continue the mission of Jesus. The Catholic Church teaches that these various cultures and traditions enrich the Church in their expressions of one faith.

2. Holy

The Church is also holy. Catholics believe Jesus is the source of all holiness. Jesus makes the Church holy and uses it to make people holy.

The Church does this through its teaching, prayer and worship and good works, making the Church a visible sign of holiness.

'Holy' doesn't mean that there are no sinners in the Church. Members of the Church are human and so make mistakes and have weaknesses. However, Catholics believe that everyone is aiming to be holy - living like Jesus, with the help of his grace.

Catholics recognise that they are weak human beings, and at times they sin and fall short of what God wants them to be. We ask for God's forgiveness and try again. The Church considers itself to be a Church of sinners: one of the prayers of the Mass before the Sign of Peace asks: "Lord, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church."

2. Catholic

The Church is also Catholic. Saint Ignatius of Antioch used this word, meaning "universal" or "whole", to describe the Church.

Christ is universally present (present everywhere) in the Church, and has commissioned the Church to evangelize.

The Church is Catholic because Jesus gives the Church everything they need for people to be saved, and the Church has the task of reaching out to the whole world with the message of Jesus.

4. Apostolic

Finally, the Church is apostolic. Catholics believe that Jesus Christ founded the Church and gave His authority to His apostles.

He entrusted a special authority to St. Peter, the first Pope and Bishop of Rome, to act as His representative on earth. T

he Church is also apostolic in that the faith found in both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition was preserved, taught, and handed on by the apostles.

The Church as The People of God

In Greek, 'ecclesia' is the word for Church. It means assembly, or gathering together.

The Church is the People of God gathered together.

The word church with a small c is used to refer to the building where Christians come to pray.

When it is written with a capital C, Catholics mean everyone who is a member of the Church, all believers together.

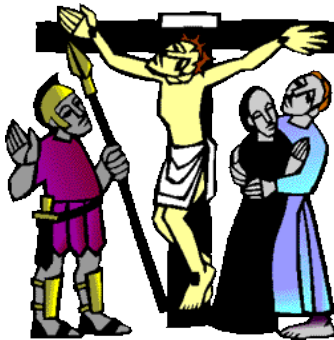


Mary as model of the Church

Mary shows us what it means to be Catholic:

Discipleship

- She spent her whole life dedicated to Jesus.
- When Mary was told by the angel that she was to be the mother of the Christ, she accepted willingly and joyfully.
- Mary shows how Christians should serve God.



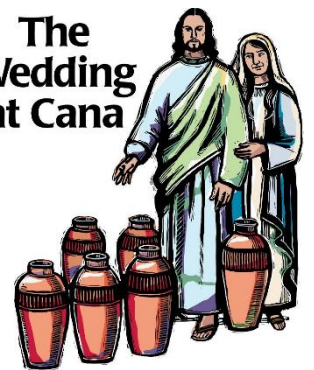
Faith

- Mary had total faith in God and in her son.
- She did not question God when she was told that she would have a child, even though she was a virgin.
- At the very end she did not desert her son, but was one of his few followers to follow him right up to the foot of the cross.

Charity

- Mary did not hold back but gave her whole life to God.
- At the Wedding Feast at Cana (John 2:1-11) she asks her son to help, knowing that he would do what was needed. The celebration had run out of wine, but Mary knew that Jesus had the power to help.
- As a result of Mary's request Jesus performed his first miracle and turned water into wine.
- This is also an example of how Jesus listens to his Mother and fulfils her request. This is one of the reasons why Catholics pray to Mary knowing that she will pray for us to Jesus.

The Wedding at Cana



Why Mary is special to Catholics today?

- Mary was chosen to be the human mother of God the Son, Jesus Christ, and is often described as Mary, Mother of God.
- Without Mary, there would be no Jesus, no incarnation and therefore no salvation.
- Mary is often called "Our Lady" by Catholics.
- All Catholic churches will have a statue of Mary and there is a special devotion to her.



- As Mary has such a special relationship with God, Catholics believe that she acts as a mediator between them and God.
- Catholics pray through Mary . She pleads to God for people.
- Catholics do not pray to Mary in the same way that they pray to God. They do not believe that she can answer prayer.
- They believe that she then prays for them. This is known as interceding.
- Catholics might light a special candle called a votive candle and place it on a special stand by her statue in church as a symbol of their prayer.

The Body of Christ

The Church is described as the Body of Christ in the New Testament and the Catechism.

Whilst on earth **Jesus showed God's love in the things he said and did**; taught and healed people and died for us. After he rose from the dead, Christians believe that he ascended (went up) into heaven, bodily (the Ascension).

Catholics believe that Christ's work of on earth did not end with the Ascension.

Jesus lives on through his followers, and in the Church, which is his 'body' on Earth.

Jesus continues His work in the world through the people he has saved by dying on the Cross. The **Church shows what God's love** is like through the work of its people.

All Christians continue the work of Jesus on Earth. Christian people are now the physical body of Jesus as he is no longer physically present in the world.

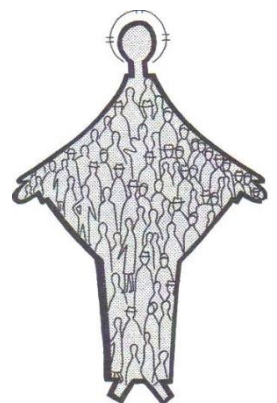
Through Baptism, Catholics believe that the individual is united with other Christians and with Christ and become part of this 'body'.

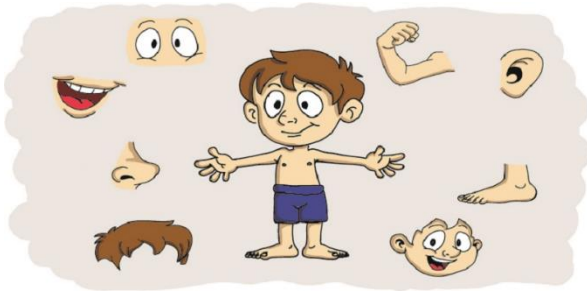
Why the Church as the Body of Christ is important for Catholics:

In the New Testament, the Church is described as 'the body of Christ' especially by Saint Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:27).

As Catholics consider themselves to be the physical form of Jesus on Earth (the Body of Christ), they must continue with his physical work, helping others and teaching

For Catholics, this also shows that Jesus is still active in the world. His work didn't end with his death, but it continues in those that follow and believe in him.





Individual Catholics can perform different tasks and yet be united.

Each person within the Church has a different talent that they can use for the good of the Church in the same way that each part of a body has a different function and is used for the good of the whole body.

The Church remains a unity because everyone is working together as the body of Christ.



This is also why the Mass is so important for Catholics.



At the Eucharist, Catholics believe that they receive the Body of Christ.

By sharing the consecrated host at communion, Catholics believe that they share in the body of Christ.

They are fed by Christ and are strengthened.

Coming together to share the Eucharist reaffirms their unity.

Roman Catholics believe that Christ is fully present in the Eucharist. This is known as the Real Presence. At Mass the bread and wine, while keeping the appearance of bread and wine, actually become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

"Outside the Church there is no salvation"

Is a very old phrase which comes from the writings of early Christian thinkers; eg the letters of St Cyprian, a Catholic bishop in Africa in the third century. For St Cyprian this phrase meant that only Catholics will go to heaven.

This is the most straightforward reading of the meaning of this phrase which is still in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 845).

But the Church does **not** teach this.



1. the Church teaches that everyone is saved through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection - whether they know it or not.

The best, most straightforward way to be saved is to be baptised and practising Catholic. Jesus says "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me."

so 'they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it' (CCC 846, citing LG 16).

Although the Catholic Church is where the Church of Christ exists in all its fullness, there are elements of "sanctification and truth" (Lumen Gentium 8) outside of the Catholic Church and so other Christians can be saved.

2. people who have not heard the Gospel of Jesus but have lived good lives can be saved because it is not their fault that they are not Christians.

They are sometimes referred to as "anonymous Christians".

These people are living good lives because of Jesus, even though they do not know this is the reason. So, people who are not Christians can also be saved.



'Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience - those too may achieve eternal salvation.' (LG 16 cited in CCC 847)

SUMMARY

- ✓ The Church is the people of God
- ✓ The Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic
- ✓ Mary is a model of the Church as an example of discipleship, faith and charity
- ✓ The Church is known as the Body of Christ and People of God
- ✓ The multiple meanings of the phrase 'Outside the Church there is no salvation'

BUILDINGS



- A Catholic church is a place of worship.
 - Most Catholics will attend a local parish church.
 - A parish is the local Christian community gathered around a church building.
 - They are usually looked after by a priest, who leads the community and celebrates the sacraments.
- Christians speak of their church as the house of God.

Exterior features of Christian places of worship:

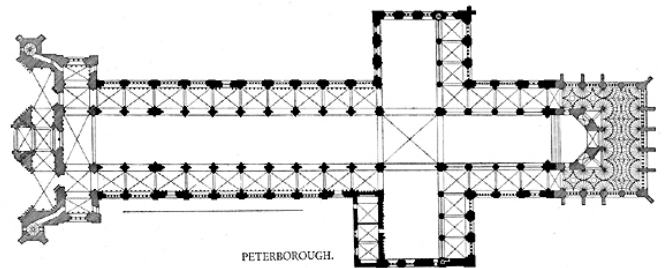


Some churches have towers, others have steeples which can be seen from long distances away.

These help the church to stand out as something special that can be recognised even by non-believers.

Towers and steeples represent prayer and worship rising up to heaven. Many towers have bells that are rung to call people to worship.

It is also common for churches to be cruciform in shape - in the shape of a cross, to show the importance of the death of Jesus.



Modern church buildings tend to be simpler. As a result of Vatican II and the changes it made to worship, some churches built since the 1960s are radically different. eg some churches are circular in design with the altar in the middle.

This signifies the oneness of the worshippers and that they are all sharing in the sacrificial meal at the altar.

It can also stand for the eternity of God.

Traditionally, churches face towards the East. Another word for East is Orient. This is where we get the word 'orientating' from.

The Jewish custom of fixing the direction of prayer and orienting synagogues influenced Christianity during its early years.

For the first Christians, it was customary to pray facing toward the Holy Land, where Jesus was born, lived, died and rose again.

Also the sun rises in the east and is a reminder of the resurrection of Jesus bringing new life.



Churches are often very tall with domes or vaulted ceilings. This creates a space which is pointing up showing a connection with God and heaven.



Very often stained glass is used in churches.

They usually display stories from the Bible or lives of the saints.

Many also have crosses or other Christian symbols to mark them out as Christian places of worship. It is not unusual for Catholic churches to have a recreation of the Grotto at Lourdes, showing how important Mary is.

Inside a Catholic Church

The interior of Roman Catholic churches can vary from being very plain and simple, to fancy and ornate, but whatever the design, the whole church will be focused on the sanctuary.

- Sanctuary means 'holy place'.
- This is where the altar, lectern and tabernacle are.
- The sanctuary is where the public worship is centred.

These are features you would expect to find in a Catholic church:



The altar



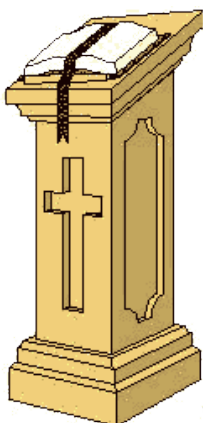
- A table structure, usually made out of stone.
- The main action of the Mass, the liturgy of the Eucharist, takes place at the altar. The priest consecrates (blesses) bread and wine here.
- The altar reminds Christians of the sacrifice and death of Jesus on the cross.
- The altar is also a table, reminding Catholics that they are sharing in a fellowship meal, as they remember the meal Jesus shared at the Last Supper.
- the Sacrament of the Eucharist or Mass is the most important sacrament.
- On or near the altar are candles, representing the Christian belief that Jesus is the light of the world.

The Baptismal Font



- a big stone basin filled with holy water where baptism is performed.
- Baptism is the sacrament by which a person becomes a Christian; it is the first to be received.
- It used to be by the main door to the church to show that people entered the Christian life through baptism. Now the font tends to be at the front so that all those present can easily see a baptism when it takes place.
- Jesus himself was baptised by John the Baptist and baptism was one of the very earliest Christian practices, following Jesus' final command to 'Go and make disciples of all nations...baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (Matt 28: 19).
- Like the altar, the font is linked to the idea of salvation because it is a sign of cleansing original sin (which all humans inherit through the first sin of Adam and Eve) and promising to live a life that is faithful to Jesus and his teachings. Such a life will lead to salvation.

Lectern



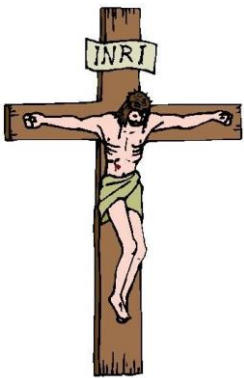
- Near the altar is the lectern, or it is sometimes called an ambo, used for the Liturgy of the Word.
- This is a book stand where the priest, deacon or reader stands to read to the congregation.
- The Word of God is proclaimed from here.
- At services they will read from a lectionary.
- A lectionary is a book containing a collection of scripture readings appointed for use on a given day.

The tabernacle

- A tabernacle is a safe-like place in which the consecrated (blessed) hosts are kept.
- The sacrament is reserved here so that it can be taken to the sick and those who are unable to come to church.
- It is also a focus for private prayer and devotion. Catholics will genuflect; go down on one knee, towards the tabernacle in honour of the presence of Jesus reserved in the Blessed Sacrament.
- The tabernacle is often behind the altar, but in some modern churches it is sometimes placed in a side chapel so that people can pray in private.
- A sanctuary lamp is found nearby, which reminds Catholics of the presence of God in the tabernacle.



The Crucifix



- In Catholic churches there is always a crucifix, a cross with an image of the crucified Christ on it.
- It is usually on or near the altar.
- It reminds us of the suffering and death of Jesus.
- Catholics believe that the death of Jesus was the price he paid for their salvation. Catholics, like all Christians, believe that Jesus died for them to forgive their sins and give them eternal life.

The Confessional

- This is a small room or box like structure in which the Sacrament of Reconciliation takes place.
- The fact there is a room dedicated to it shows how important the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to Catholics.



- Inside there is a screen so that the person confessing their sins (the penitent) can make their confession anonymously.
 - The priest sits on one side while the penitent kneels in the other.
 - When the penitent has confessed their sins, the priest gives them a penance, such as a prayer and then absolves them; tells them their sins are forgiven by God.
- By penance and absolution they are reconciled to God, which means that their relationship with God is restored.

Other features:

- As people come into the church they pass a **holy water container or stoup**. They sign themselves with water, making the sign of the cross to remind themselves of the Trinity, the death of Jesus and their own baptism. It also helps to focus their mind into a reverent attitude as they enter the church.
- Other important features of a Roman Catholic Church are **Stations of the Cross**. They are especially used in Lent to focus worship on the death of Jesus. They are usually pictures or carvings of each of the fourteen stages of Christ's Passion (trials, death and resurrection).
- **Statues** are usually found around the church to help people pray. One of them will usually be of Our Lady. In front of the statues there will probably be votive candles. In Catholic churches, Christians place a lighted candle symbolizing their prayer. The statues are not worshipped in any way, they are just used to focus the mind and as aids to prayer.

SUMMARY

- ✓ A Catholic church is the place of worship where Catholics gather as a community to celebrate their faith.
- ✓ Some churches have towers or steeples which are symbolic of prayer rising up to God.
- ✓ Traditionally, churches face towards the East and are built in a cruciform shape.
- ✓ The focal point of a Roman Catholic Church building is the sanctuary. You will find the altar and lectern here.
- ✓ The altar is the stone table at which the liturgy of the Eucharist takes place.
- ✓ The font is a wooden or stone basin, filled with holy water where baptism takes place
- ✓ Other features of the building are the confessional, the stoup and the tabernacle.
- ✓ Stations of the Cross and statues are there as aids to prayer.

SACRAMENTS

What is a sacrament?

- 'an outward sign of inward grace, ordained by God, by which grace is given to the soul'.

Catholics believe that everything Jesus said and did while on earth was a visible sign of God's love. People could see him, hear him and touch him.

When Jesus returned to heaven, Christians believe that he left the Church to be his body, and **the way to 'see', 'hear' and 'touch' him is through the sacraments.**



We meet God in the sacraments.

The sacramental nature of reality

Catholics believe that the whole of creation shows the presence of God. God's presence and love are not distant things but realities all around us every day.

Catholics see every natural and human thing as a way for God to communicate with us.

Through the sacraments, Catholics experience God's nourishing, forgiving, healing, strengthening power in a special way.

Through human realities - food, drink, touch - God tells us we are loved.



The importance of the sacraments to Catholics

God's grace is at work in the sacraments.

Every sacrament is a 'sign' through which God acts.

God gives grace to people through ordinary things, like bread and wine in the eucharist, or water in baptism.

This is what is meant by 'outward signs' of 'inward grace'.



There are seven sacraments in the Catholic Church:

1. baptism,
2. confirmation,
3. eucharist,
4. penance,
5. anointing of the sick,
6. holy orders and
7. matrimony.



The seven sacraments

Sacraments of initiation

1. **Baptism:** the first step in a lifelong journey of commitment and discipleship. Water is sprinkled on a baby's head while the priest says, *'I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'* The person being baptised becomes **part of the family of God**.

Baptism **takes away original sin** (which all humans have inherited through the first sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) and gives a **new birth in the Holy Spirit**.

Its sign is the pouring of water.



2. **Confirmation:** completes the sacrament of baptism. If baptism is the sacrament of re-birth to a new life, confirmation is the **sacrament of maturity and coming of age**. It gives the strength to follow Jesus and to become involved in the mission he left to the Church.

Its signs are the laying-on of hands on a person's head, most often by a bishop, and the anointing with oil.

3. **Eucharist:** At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread and wine and asked his followers to re-enact the meal when they come together.

Its signs are the bread and wine that Catholics receive at Mass - the body and blood of Christ.

Catholics believe the Eucharist, or Communion, is both a **sacrifice and a meal**. They believe in the real presence of Jesus. As they receive his body and blood, they are nourished spiritually.



Sacraments of healing

These celebrate the healing power of Jesus.

1. **Reconciliation or Penance (confession):** by expressing sorrow for their sins in the sacrament of penance or reconciliation, Catholics experience **God's forgiveness** and healing through absolution by the priest. Their relationship with God and their unity as a Church is made whole again.

The signs of this sacrament are the confession of sins and the priest's words of absolution (forgiveness).



2. **Anointing of the sick:** unites a sick person's suffering with that of Jesus and brings forgiveness of sins. The individual is **anointed with oil (a symbol of strength) and receives the laying-on of hands from a priest**. In the past, this sacrament was only given to those close to death, but more recently the Church has encouraged its use for illness which is not necessarily life-threatening.



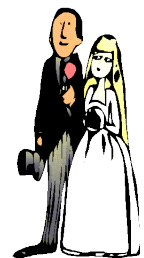
Anointing the sick

Sacraments at the service of communion (vocation or mission)

These help people serve the community and bring about the salvation of others.

1. **Matrimony:** a baptised man and woman are united as a sign of the unity between Jesus and his Church. Matrimony needs the consent of the couple, as expressed in the marriage promises (vows).

The couple and their wedding rings are the signs of this sacrament.



2. **Holy orders:** men are ordained as priests, deacons, or bishops. Priests are spiritual leaders of their communities, and deacons remind us of our baptismal call to help others. Bishops carry on the teachings of the apostles.



The signs of this sacrament are the laying on of hands and anointing with oil by a bishop.

The importance of the Eucharist for Catholics.

The Last Supper was the meal that Jesus had with his disciples on the evening before he was arrested. He reassured his disciples that, after he had left the earth, the Holy Spirit would be sent to them to keep his message and teaching alive.



Jesus gave his disciples **two symbols** to be used in remembrance of him.

- i. The **bread** represents Jesus' **body**
- ii. the **wine** represents his **blood**.

The Mass or Eucharist is the liturgical service where Catholics gather to recall the Last Supper. Sunday, the day of the resurrection, is the most holy day. Catholics are obliged to go to Mass on Sunday if they are capable.

The Eucharist '**the source and summit of the Christian life**' because:

- being unified with God is the most important thing to Catholics.
 - it is at the heart of their spiritual life;
 - they become close to God because they receive Jesus in communion
- Mass re-enacts the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, so it is the highest form of prayer that a believer can make.
 - By receiving the Eucharist in communion, Christ's Body and Blood spiritually sustains the believer.
 - In the Eucharistic prayer, said by the priest who gives thanks to God, the central part is the prayer of consecration, when the priest repeats Jesus' words at the Last Supper: '*This is my body... This is my blood.*'
Catholics believe that the **bread and wine are transformed into Jesus' body and blood**. The technical word for this is **transubstantiation**.
 - It makes individual Catholics **part of the Body of Christ** (the Christian community).

Catholics believe Christ is present in the Mass in four ways:

1. In the consecrated **bread and wine**, which are Jesus' body and blood
2. In the **readings** (especially those from the Gospels) as Jesus is the Word of God
3. In the **believers** gathered together because Jesus said, 'where two or three are gathered in my name I am there among them.'
4. In the person of the **priest** (RCs believe that Christ works through the ministry of the priesthood to transform the bread and wine into his body and blood)



SUMMARY

- ✓ A sacrament is 'an outward sign of inward grace, ordained by *God*, by which grace is given to the soul'. There are seven sacraments.
- ✓ The sacramental nature of reality means that *God* can speak to us through the world
- ✓ The Eucharist/Mass is at the heart of *Catholic* Worship, it re-enacts the sacrifice of *Jesus*

MISSION AND EVANGELISATION



'Go out and make disciples of all nations....'

(Matt 28:19)

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives his apostles their mission.

Mission means the calling to go out into the world and spread the faith.

The mission of the Church is to go out into the world:

- to go out to the ends of the earth
- to baptise people into the Church
- to teach the teachings of Christ

The Church began in Jerusalem and quickly spread through the Roman Empire.

St Paul was one of the first missionaries. Many missionaries were persecuted or even killed for their beliefs. In the last 500 years, the Church has become truly worldwide. Missionaries have gone from Europe and started churches in Africa, South America and in Asia.

Going out to preach the gospel is known as **evangelisation**.

In recent years the Church is no longer evangelising in places that have not heard the Gospel before, but in the largely secular West, where many people have heard of the Gospels but are not particularly interested.

Evangelii Gaudium

In 2013, Pope Francis wrote a letter to the world, called *Evangelii Gaudium*, which, in Latin, means 'The joy of the gospel'. Its theme is the Church's mission of evangelisation in the modern world.

Pope Francis says that the heart of the Christian message is **love for one another**, which must motivate Christians to share the gospel, help the poor and work for social justice. Catholics must care for 'the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others.'

Pope Francis says that God, in Jesus, made himself lowly and poor. For this reason, the pope wants 'a Church which is poor and for the poor' (EG 198). He wants the Church to

have a special love and care for 'above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked' (EG 48).

Pope Francis also says that the parish (the local church community) is important in spreading the Church's message:

- As well as a church, many parishes have a Catholic primary and secondary school connected to them. These provide Catholic education and help to spread the teachings of Jesus.
- Parishes should be welcoming places, ready to greet new people and receive them into the community.
- The Pope says that Catholics should be outward looking, this means they should look for new ways to spread the gospel message.



How and why does the Church engage in evangelisation?

Why?



Jesus saved everyone - but people need to accept Jesus to benefit from the life he gives. The Catholic Church believes it has a duty to spread this faith as Jesus told his disciples to do.

How?

Locally:

- The message of God's love is passed on through the whole life of the parish (celebration of the Mass, sacraments, Bible study, charitable work, social events, parish retreats, outreach events, etc.). Pope Francis talks a lot about the parish and says that the parish 'possesses great flexibility'.
- parishes joins with other Christian churches, other faith communities, social workers and agencies) to show the Church's work for justice, social cohesion and the common good, which is also part of evangelisation, because it is living out the gospel message of love.
- local diocesan newspapers that the Church uses to help people learn more about their faith, eg the Catholic Pictorial in Liverpool or the Westminster Record in Westminster.



Nationally:

- the Bishops' Conference of a country helps Catholics to share the gospel. eg the department for Evangelisation and Catechesis of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has a 'Home Mission Desk'.
- In 2015 a national evangelisation initiative called Proclaim '15: building missionary parishes', was introduced, designed to provide resources to develop Catholic missionary outreach.
- Catholic publications eg The Tablet, The Catholic Herald, The Catholic Times.

Globally:

- The Catholic Church has a worldwide platform and in the Congregation of the Evangelization of Peoples it has a specific department in the Vatican which looks after it. The Pope is a global figure (e.g. speaks to the world through World Youth Days) and Vatican Radio and TV station.
- international charities like CAFOD.
- missionary organisations like Missio

Religious Diversity in Britain: Benefits and Challenges



The UK is a multi-faith society in which people of different religions, and no religion, live alongside each other. According to the 2011 census, the profile of religious belief in Britain has changed considerably since 2001.

Half of the people questioned still consider themselves as Christian, but Britain has an increasingly diverse pattern of religious and non-religious beliefs and practices.

Benefits

- ❖ Greater tolerance and understanding of the beliefs of others
- ❖ Varied and rich cultural life from experiencing the religions and traditions of others
- ❖ Better understanding of different viewpoints
- ❖ New ways of living and enjoying life

Challenges

- ❖ It is not always easy to be open and understanding towards the views of others
- ❖ There are examples of religious persecution and hatred
- ❖ Tensions can exist between different faith groups
- ❖ Beliefs and values of some people may be ignored

Issues:

- Conversion -there can be issues where one group of religious believers try to convert another to their faith, which could cause conflict
- Interfaith marriages- when two members of different religions get married. This could cause conflict between families with different beliefs and values.
- Raising Children - within interfaith marriages both parents might want their children raised within their own faith. This could lead to confusion and arguments.

Religious Leaders are often involved in interfaith dialogue led by these principles:

- Recognise the common features between faiths
- Respect differences
- Listen to each other
- Learn to live and work in unity
- Shared common values such as respect, tolerance, charity and non-violence



Christian Traditions, Non-Christian and non-religious Traditions

- In the UK, laws, festivals and traditions are rooted in the Christian tradition.
- Two of the main holiday periods in the UK are Christmas and Easter, although it is common now to see celebrations of Eid, Diwali and Chinese New Year.
- In recent times we have humanist celebrations of births, weddings and funerals. These occasions have traditionally been religious celebrations but many non-religious people want to celebrate these events without the mention of God

SUMMARY

- ✓ The Mission of the Church is to go out into the World and spread the Gospel.
- ✓ The 2013 letter by Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, deals with evangelisation. It is all Christians' responsibility to preach the Gospel by loving one another, helping the poor and working for social justice.
- ✓ Britain is a multi-faith society which brings benefits and challenges.
- ✓ UK law and culture is rooted in Christian tradition. However, the influence of other faiths and no faith, has increased.