



Catholicism: The Roman Catholic Church

FOUNDER

- ▶ Jesus Christ
- ▶ St. Peter (First Pope)

DATE

- ▶ About AD 610, in Mecca and Medina

LOCATION

- ▶ Centered in Mecca, Saudi Arabia

KEY WRITINGS

- ▶ *The Holy Bible* (73 books)
- ▶ *The Apocrypha* - meaning "hidden". Was written between the Old and New Testaments
- ▶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

WHO IS GOD?

- ▶ The one God is **Triune** (one God in three Persons, *not* three gods): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Often the title "God" designates the **first** Person, God the Father.
- ▶ God is a spiritual being without a **physical** body.
- ▶ He is **personal** and involved with people.
- ▶ He **created** the universe out of nothing.
- ▶ He is **eternal**, immutable in his character, holy, loving, and perfect.

WHO IS JESUS?

- ▶ Jesus is God, the **second** Person of the Trinity.
- ▶ As God the Son, Jesus has **always** existed and was never created.
- ▶ Jesus is **fully** God and **fully** man (the two natures joined, not mixed).
- ▶ As the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus is **coequal** with God the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ In becoming man, Jesus was **begotten** through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary.
- ▶ Jesus is the **only** way to the Father and eternal life.
- ▶ Jesus died on a cross according to God's plan, as a substitutionary **sacrifice**, and as full payment for our sins.
- ▶ Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, spiritually **and** physically immortal. For the following 40 days He was seen by more than 500 eyewitnesses. His wounds were touched and He ate meals.
- ▶ Jesus physically **ascended** to Heaven.
- ▶ Jesus will come again visibly and physically at the end of the world to establish God's kingdom and **judge** the world.

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- ▶ The Holy Spirit is God, the **third** Person of the Trinity.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit is **not** the Father, nor is He the Son, Jesus Christ.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit is a **person**, not a force or energy field.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit comforts, grieves, reproves, convicts, guides, teaches, and **fills** Christians.

- ▶ The **seven** gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe
- ▶ The Holy Spirit is received during water baptism, even as **infants**.
- ▶ The Holy Spirit is received again at **Confirmation**, as a second “installment”.

HOW TO BE SAVED

- ▶ There are seven **sacraments** through which we receive God’s grace.

▪ Baptism	▪ Anointing of the Sick
▪ Eucharist (Communion)	▪ Holy Orders
▪ Confirmation	▪ Holy Matrimony
▪ Reconciliation (Confession)	
- ▶ Baptism: Trinitarian baptism; the baptized person becomes a new creature in Christ and receives the free gift of **sanctifying** grace produced by Christ’s sacrificial death.
- ▶ Eucharist: The **real presence** (transubstantiation) of Christ’s body, blood, soul, and divinity under the guise of bread and wine, unites the Catholic Church in an intimate relationship with Christ and brings the grace needed to live as a faithful believer.
- ▶ Confirmation: The confirmed person receives the **Holy Spirit** through the sacrament and is more perfectly united with Christ as a faithful believer and disciple of Christ. The rite of confirmation can occur as early as age 7 for children who were baptized as infants but is commonly received around age 13.
- ▶ Reconciliation: Sacrament instituted by Christ for the forgiveness of sin paid for by Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross.
 1. CONTRITION
 - A **sincere** sorrow for having offended God, and the most important act of the penitent.
 2. CONFESSION
 - Confronting our sins in a profound way to God by **speaking** about them aloud to the priest.
 3. PENANCE
 - An important part of our healing is the “penance” the priest imposes in **reparation** for our sins.
 4. ABSOLUTION
 - The priest speaks the words by which “God, the Father of Mercies” **reconciles** a sinner to Himself through the merits of the Cross.
 - Prayer of Absolution:

“God, the Father of mercies through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
- ▶ Anointing of the Sick: Instituted by Christ to confer a special grace for the **sick** and **aging**. This sacrament unites a sick person’s suffering with that of Jesus and brings forgiveness of sins. Oil, a symbol of strength, is the sign of this sacrament. A person is anointed with oil and receives the laying on of hands from a priest.
- ▶ Holy Orders: Sacrament of apostolic ministry which confers the special grace needed for the Christian ministerial **priesthood**. In Holy Orders men are ordained as priests, deacons, or bishops. The signs of this sacrament are the laying on of hands and anointing with oil by the bishop.

- ▶ Holy Matrimony: A sacrament between a baptized man and woman, which unites a man and woman **in one flesh**. The grace of matrimony bring the spouses together to live a more unified Christian life and continue God's call to bear children who are baptized into his family.
- ▶ Sanctifying grace is brought through **baptism**, which purifies a person's soul, forgives all sin and makes a person a child of God.
- ▶ Baptism is necessary to purge **original** sin.
- ▶ One must **confess** each of their sins to a priest to be cleansed from sin.
- ▶ They must also continue to confess sins they **continue** to commit.
- ▶ Salvation is affected by the state of one's soul and the soul can **ONLY** be cleansed by genuine and sorrowful confession of sin to a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Sin accumulates frequently and therefore confession is required frequently, certainly at least every month.
- ▶ The sacrament of Reconciliation forgives mortal and venial personal sins and **restores** sanctifying grace lost through mortal sin.
- ▶ All other sacraments (especially Eucharist) **increase** redeeming grace.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH

- ▶ Only souls free from **mortal** sin, who receive salvation through Jesus Christ, will spend eternal life in Heaven.
- ▶ Generally, souls free of **unconfessed** sins get to go directly to God in Heaven, the highest goal of every Catholic.
- ▶ Many will first have to go through purification of sin in **Purgatory**. Generally, all other souls will spend eternal separation from God, in hell.
- ▶ Souls with unconfessed non-mortal sins must undergo purification from sin in Purgatory, because sinful souls **cannot** approach God's throne.
- ▶ Being purified is excruciatingly **painful** and possibly lengthy, though the souls journey there is temporary.
- ▶ After the soul's **cleansing**, it proceeds to God in Heaven to live out the remainder of eternity.
- ▶ Hell is where your soul ends up if you have committed any unconfessed **mortal** sins, such as murder, hatred, adultery, sexual sin, etc.
- ▶ There is **nothing** more terrible than to be sent to hell for even a moment, let alone for all time.
- ▶ One must do **everything** possible here on Earth to avoid hell.
- ▶ **Limbo** - It is contradiction to the mercy of God that the souls of babies, who could not have committed personal sin, should go to hell, just because they had not yet been baptized and were therefore unable to go to heaven.
- ▶ Limbo, a word in Latin that means "**marginal**", was never an official teaching, but instead was a theological speculation.
- ▶ Limbo was thought to a place of peace, without torment, but also out of communion with God, as a temporary refuge for those in the Catholic faith who died before they could be **baptized**.
- ▶ It was felt that they would go to heaven at the time of the **Last Judgment**.
- ▶ It is now taught that the souls of babies are **entrusted** to the mercy of God instead of speculating about them.

OTHER BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

- ▶ Catholics do not believe in **sola scriptura** (Scripture alone).
- ▶ Church **tradition** has equal authority as Scripture.
- ▶ Scripture needs to be interpreted and the Church does so using the **Tradition** of the Apostles.
- ▶ The Catholic Church has retained Apostolic authority through Apostolic **Succession**, starting with Peter.
- ▶ Catholics believe in the “**infallibility** of the Pope”, meaning whatever the Pope teaches is to be accepted as true and correct.
- ▶ A current Pope’s teaching **supersedes** and **overrides** previous Papal teaching.
- ▶ Thus, Catholic doctrine can be fluid and **change** from Pope to Pope.
- ▶ Catholics can **pray** to past Saints.
- ▶ Saints must be officially **approved** by The Vatican and must pass certain requirements.
- ▶ Catholics are also encouraged to **pray** to Mary.
- ▶ Mary is seen as **sinless** (full of grace)
- ▶ Catholics are also encouraged to repeat the “**Hail Mary**”.

THE *FIVE SOLAS* OF THE REFORMATION

- ▶ Sola Scriptura (**Scripture** Alone)
- ▶ Sola Gratia (**Grace** Alone)
- ▶ Sola Fide (**Faith** Alone)
- ▶ Solus Christus (**Christ** Alone)
- ▶ Soli Deo Gloria (To **God** Alone Be Glory)

Resource for Further Study:

Books

1. Christopher A. Castaldo, *Talking with Catholics about the Gospel: A Guide for Evangelicals*
2. Ron Rhodes, *The 10 Most Important Things You Can Say to a Catholic*
3. R.C. Sproul, *Are We Together?: A Protestant Analyzes Roman Catholicism*