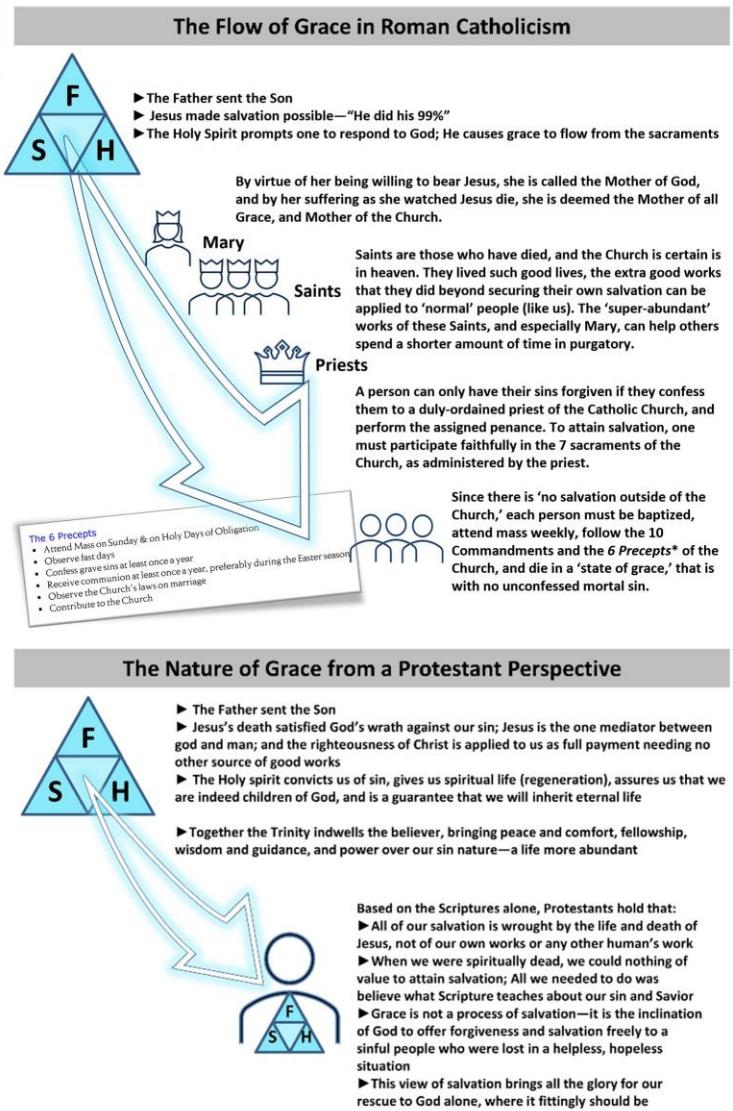
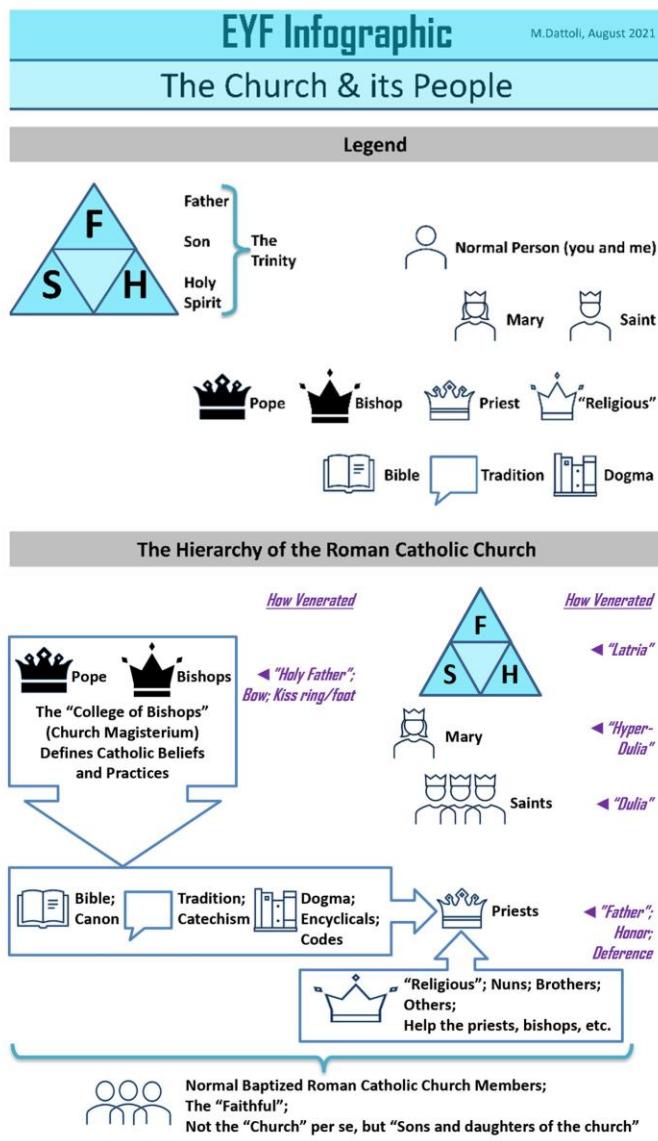


## 22. An Infographic on The Catholic Church & Its People



### Comments on the Infographic

The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic shows how it is structured (see Dogma #141). Historically, after the fall of the Roman Empire, the church in Rome began to take dominance in the affairs of government. As it evolved over the centuries, the Pope began to fulfill the role of the Roman Emperor (including titles like Pontifex Maximus); the Council of Bishops – the role of the Roman Senate, the Priests – the role of the Free Men. That left the average church person to take the role of the slaves. That arrangement was justified by the belief that the Pope is the successor of St. Peter, and the bishops the successors of the other Apostles of Christ.

This diagram focuses on the theological side of the church, not the 'state'-side (the Vatican). But FYI:

- Vatican City is a sovereign state with its own euros, stamps, passports, etc.
- This 'city' is the smallest *country* in the world, about 100 acres, and under 1000 citizens
- St. Peter's Basilica sits atop a city of the dead, including its namesake's tomb
- Benito Mussolini signed Vatican City into existence in 1929

From: [history.com/news/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-vatican](http://history.com/news/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-vatican)

## The Infographic's Legend

The Pope with the leading Bishops make and maintain the rules for the church. As the “Magisterium” they are the official teaching office of the Church. In this role:

- Believing that “the church is the mother of the Bible,” they act accordingly. They determine what books should be in the Bible (the *canon*). For example, in response to the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation, they added the *Apocrypha* (in a somewhat thinly veiled attempt to justify practices that the Reformers said were unbiblical from the newly added ‘biblical’ sources). The Apocrypha is a collection of books written in the four centuries between the Old and New Testaments—books not considered authoritative, or divinely inspired, in Judaism and Protestant Christian churches, or by the Catholic Church until it felt obligated to do so at the Council of Trent (1545-63). Jesus and the New Testament authors never directly quote the Apocrypha. The books are Tobit, Judith, Wisdom (also called the Wisdom of Solomon), Sirach (also called Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, 1 Maccabees, and 2 Maccabees. The Catholic Bible also contains additional passages in the books of Esther and Daniel.  
► By way of contrast, Protestants believe that “the Bible is the mother of the church.” And rather than *determining* what books make up the Bible, they believe that the church merely *recognizes* which have been divinely inspired. Other than the Apocrypha, this has worked well. Since the 4<sup>th</sup>-century all churches have generally recognized the same 27 books of the New Testament, and the 39 books of the Old Testament.
- The Magisterium defines the Holy or Sacred Tradition of the Church. With the 1992 publication of the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, much of this has finally been written down in a format accessible by lay people. Other official documents of the Church include Encyclicals, Bulls, Declarations, Enchiridions, Codes, Lists of Saints, Lists of Indulgences, etc.
- Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture—because the Magisterium considers both of these sources to be the Word of God (passed down orally and in writing) it is important to note this: The written Scriptures are considered *a part of* the Tradition of the Church. So, as Leonardo De Chirico says: “In Catholicism, Tradition both *precedes* and *exceeds* Scripture.” This is likely why the Catholic Church has a history of keeping the Scriptures away from its people (although since the mid-1960’s this has changed somewhat).
- One other note on Scripture: In the *New American Bible*, an official Catholic translation, there are these interesting, introductory notes:
  - Page 4. “A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful who use Sacred Scripture for spiritual reading with the veneration due to the word of God. A plenary indulgence is granted if the reading continues for at least one half hour.”
    - From the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh ([diopitt.org/what-are-plenary-indulgences](http://diopitt.org/what-are-plenary-indulgences)) are these definitions: **What are indulgences?** Even though confessed and forgiven sins will not send a person to hell, consequences remain to be paid on earth or in purgatory. An indulgence frees the recipient from those consequences. Reception of an indulgence always springs from sincere repentance, the desire to live a holy life, reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion as soon as possible and prayer for the Holy Father. An indulgence cannot be bought, nor can one be obtained by going through the motions without sincerity. **A partial indulgence** covers part of the punishment due for sins; **a plenary indulgence** removes all of it. Both kinds of indulgence come from the merits of Jesus, the Blessed Mother and the saints. These “merits” are the opposite of “demerits.” They are spiritual fruits accumulated through holy living. To grant indulgences, the Church draws on a great treasury of merits: the infinite value of Christ’s Passion, death and Resurrection, and the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints – including all of those on earth who live holy lives.”
    - Page 11. “But the task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the church.”

- Priests carry out the work of the Church in their parishes. They implement and teach what the Magisterium defines. Other people, called the “religious,” serve as nuns, brothers, etc. and may assist the priests. (Assistants to the Pope in the Vatican may be Cardinals, Monsignor, etc.)
- In the Catholic Church there is a clear distinction between the **clergy** and the ‘average’ church member (called the **laity**, “the faithful”, or “the sons and daughters of the church”). Only the trained and ordained clergy are authorized to perform the sacraments.
- Some Catholic sources seem to say it is a responsibility of lay people to share their faith, other sources seem to disagree, leaving the expansion of the church to the trained clergy (which, to a degree, explains why most Catholic people tend not to be as ‘evangelistic’ as Evangelicals tend to be). In either case, Catholic people don’t generally seem to be encouraged to share their faith from the typical homily that they hear at mass. Nor, for that matter, do they often hear that they should be studying the Scriptures.

## Veneration

In the Legend are some notes about *veneration*—the showing of respect or honor, and closely-related to the term *worship*. This can be a very contentious matter when explaining your faith, and I would suggest it may get you side-tracked from more important issues. The Roman Catholic Church is careful (if you know where to look for it) to define three types of worship: *Latria*, *Dulia*, and *Hyper-Dulia*...**unless you are aware of this, you can easily misrepresent things** if you say something like “It’s unbiblical to worship Mary.” (See a great article for more on this in the next section, from [www.GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org), incidentally one of my favorite websites.)

Dogma #158 makes it clear that “It is permissible and profitable to venerate the Saints in Heaven, and to invoke their intercession” (praying to them, asking them to pray for us). Dogmas #159-160 says it is permissible and profitable to venerate their relics and images as well.

## “Grace” — “Same Words, Different Meanings”

Leonardo De Chirico teaches a lecture “Same Words, Same Gospel?” in which he explains how many of the key words used by Catholics and Protestants have completely different meanings. “Grace” is one of those.

### The Flow of Grace in Roman Catholicism

- ✓ We’ll agree that the Father sent the Son. But we disagree that:
- ⌚ Jesus only did his 99% (sometimes stated that He “opened the door to heaven” allowing us the opportunity to save ourselves).
- ⌚ The Spirit prompts us to respond by offering us “grace,” and we are able to and must “cooperate” (see Dogmas #122-4).
- ⌚ By bearing Jesus, Mary is called the Mother of God (first in 432, reaffirmed in 1931), and by her suffering as she watched Jesus die, she is deemed the Co-Redeemer (1922).

De Chirico is the Pastor of Breccia di *Roma*, a church that he helped plant in Rome in 2009, and Vice Chairman of the *Italian Evangelical Alliance*, and the director of the *Reformanda Initiative*, which equips evangelical leaders to better understand and engage with Roman Catholicism.

He has a great, new video series of 5 lectures, 3 hours (but 2 hours listening at 1.5 speed) which is available on the Forum of Christian Leaders’ **Master Class** website. The lectures are here:

1. [Same Words, Same Gospel?](#)
2. [Why “Roman” and Why “Catholicism?”](#)
3. [Where Is the Roman Catholic Church Going with Pope Francis?](#)
4. [Can Evangelicals Be United with Rome?](#)
5. [Communicating the Gospel to Roman Catholics](#)

The series notes are here:

[fclonline.org/sites/live.fclonline.org//files/masterclass\\_fcl.pdf](http://fclonline.org/sites/live.fclonline.org//files/masterclass_fcl.pdf)

A full set of lectures is here: [fclonline.org/user/8244/webinars](http://fclonline.org/user/8244/webinars)

A Catholic website ([catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=360](http://catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=360)) explains why all grace flows through Mary:

*As our Lord was dying on the Cross, he gives to his Virgin Mother the new role of Mother of all Christians: "Woman, behold, your son!...Behold, your mother!" At the Lord's command the Blessed Virgin becomes Mother of all Christians (and universally, the Mother of all peoples), and therein is called to exercise her supernatural duties as our spiritual Mother. This surely means that she will have the task of nourishing her children, and she does this by mediating the graces of the Redemption from Christ to mankind. Therefore, she is "Mediatrix of all Graces."*

Saints are those who have died and the Church is certain is in heaven, and after an extensive process of vetting ('beatification'), are designated 'saints.' They have supposedly lived such good lives that the extra good works that they did beyond securing their own salvation can be applied to 'normal' people (like us). The 'super-abundant' works of these Saints can help others spend a shorter amount of time in purgatory.

*The treasury of merit is the super-abundant store of righteousness and good works belonging to Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. The treasury of merit is filled with the merit of Christ and Mary (who were sinless), and the saints, who had more than enough merit to enter heaven themselves—they had earned more spiritual rewards than they needed. This merit is now available to others to "supplement" their own meritorious works.*

*From: [gotquestions.org/treasury-of-merit.html](http://gotquestions.org/treasury-of-merit.html)*

A person can only have their sins forgiven if they confess them to a duly ordained Catholic priest and perform the assigned penance with the proper disposition. To attain salvation, one must participate faithfully in the 7 sacraments of the Church, as administered by the priest. Dogmas #157, 169, 170, 176, 202, 212, etc. support this.

Since there is 'no salvation outside of the Church,' each person must be baptized, attend mass weekly, follow the 10 Commandments and the 6 Precepts\* of the Church, and die in a 'state of grace,' that is with no unconfessed mortal sin. Dogmas #133, 135, 136, 176, 250, etc. support this.

### **"The Nature of Grace"**

Most Protestants believe that we are invited to come to God through Jesus, not through a priest or a church. When a person places their trust in Christ alone (or the Holy Spirit causes us to be born from above, which is the same thing), the trinity takes up residence in us, obviating the need for any intermediaries between us. It is also the moment at which we become part of Christ's body—the universal or invisible church.

**[An aside.** As opposed to Dogma #141, we see the church as simply all those who are truly saved, whether we choose to be organized hierarchically or not; there is no command or example in Scripture that local churches need to band together in any form. And unlike Dogmas #142-148, and 150-152, we do not believe Scripture teaches the succession of Peter or the Apostles to rule the church. While in early church history we do see some church leaders get together (such as the Jerusalem Council recorded in Acts 15) and some 'pastors of pastors' evolve into a 'bishops' role, we do not see it necessarily a beneficial evolution. In fact, as Lord Acton famously observed, in a time of corrupt popes, "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely."]

So Protestants do not believe that grace "flows" like some substance through intermediaries. We read the Scriptures that grace is the inclination of God to offer salvation freely to ungodly people—that is its nature.

Scripture teaches that we are dead in our trespasses (Eph. 2:1, Col. 2:13), unable to understand or respond to spiritual truth (1 Cor. 2:14). We are 'born from above' when the Holy Spirit gives us new life (John 3:8). It is not a result of the will of any human being (John 1:13). Unlike Dogma #124 we do not have it within our natural (lost) state to cooperate with a spiritual prompting of the Holy Spirit. In John 11, when Jesus said "Lazarus,

come forth,” raising Lazarus from the dead, it is a clear example for us—that Lazarus did nothing to receive life—it was all accomplished by God. Spiritual life comes from someone who is spiritually alive and can give birth. In John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” A person does not give birth to himself.

Because we were chosen by the Father before time began, because our sins are forgiven through the sacrifice of Christ, and because our conversion is completely implemented by the Holy Spirit, the ultimate glory must go to God alone. This is one of the *5 Solas* of the Reformation: ***Soli Deo Gloria*** — To God Alone Be the Glory. (Incidentally the initials of which—SDG—composers such as J.S. Bach and others wrote on many of their compositions.)

When we make it to glory, none of will boast of ourselves, only in the cross of Christ. And it’s what we should do on earth too!

- Romans 5:1-2. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.
- Romans 5:11. Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
- 1 Corinthians 1:31, 2 Corinthians 10:17. Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.
- Galatians 6:14. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Finally, we believe what Scripture makes clear:

- John 14:23 “Jesus replied, ‘Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.’”
- 1 Cor 3:16 says “You are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you.”
- 2 Cor 6:16 says “We are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

This is a promise of direct intimacy with God in his fullness. We will not let the traditions of men get in the way of that relationship!

## 23. What does the Bible say about confession of sin to a priest?

From: [gotquestions.org/confession-sin-priest.html](http://gotquestions.org/confession-sin-priest.html)

The concept of confession of sin to a priest is nowhere taught in Scripture. First, the New Testament does not teach that there are to be priests in the New Covenant. Instead, the New Testament teaches that all believers are priests. First Peter 2:5-9 describes believers as a “holy priesthood” and a “royal priesthood.” Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 both describe believers as “a kingdom of priests.” In the Old Covenant, the faithful had to approach God through the priests. The priests were mediators between the people and God. The priests offered sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. That is no longer necessary. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, we can now approach God’s throne with boldness (Hebrews 4:16). The temple veil tearing in two at Jesus’ death was symbolic of the dividing wall between God and humanity being destroyed. We can approach God directly, ourselves, without the use of a human mediator. Why? Because Jesus Christ is our great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-15; 10:21) and the only mediator between us and God (1 Timothy 2:5). The New Testament teaches that there are to be elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13), and pastors (Ephesians 4:11) – but not priests.

When it comes to confession of sin, believers are told in 1 John 1:9 to confess their sins to God. God is faithful and just to forgive our sins as we confess them to Him. James 5:16 speaks of confessing our trespasses “to one another,” but this is not the same as confessing sins to a priest as the Roman Catholic Church teaches. Priests/church leaders are nowhere mentioned in the context of James 5:16. Further, James 5:16 does not link forgiveness of sins with the confession of sins “to one another.”

The Roman Catholic Church bases their practice of confession to a priest primarily on Catholic tradition. Catholics do point to John 20:23, “If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” From this verse, Catholics claim that God gave the apostles the authority to forgive sins and that authority was passed on to the successors of the apostles, i.e., the bishops and priests of the Roman Catholic Church. There are several problems with this interpretation. (1) John 20:23 nowhere mentions confession of sin. (2) John 20:23 nowhere promises or even hints that apostolic authority of any kind would be passed on to the successors of the apostles. (3) The apostles never once in the New Testament acted as if they had the authority to forgive a person’s sin. Similarly, Catholics point to Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 (binding and loosing) as evidence for the Catholic Church’s authority to forgive sins. The same three above points apply equally to these Scriptures.

The ability to forgive sins is God’s and His alone (Isaiah 43:25). The better understanding of John 20:23 is that the apostles were given the responsibility of declaring with utmost certainty the terms on which God would forgive sins. As the church was being founded, the apostles declared that those who believed the gospel were forgiven (Acts 16:31) and those who did not obey the gospel faced judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 4:17). As the apostles proclaimed salvation in Christ (Acts 10:43) and exercised church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:4-5), they were wielding the authority Christ had given them.

Again, the concept of confession of sin to a priest is nowhere taught in Scripture. We are to confess our sins to God (1 John 1:9). As New Covenant believers, we do not need mediators between us and God. We can go to God directly because of Jesus’ sacrifice for us. First Timothy 2:5 says, “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

## 24. What is the difference between veneration and worship?

From: <https://www.gotquestions.org/veneration.html>

In response to the accusation that they worship Mary and the saints, Catholics will often claim that they “venerate,” not worship, them. To venerate is to regard with great respect or to revere. Veneration can be defined as “respect or awe directed toward someone due to his/her value or greatness.”

The simplest definition of worship is to “ascribe worth.” Worship can be more completely defined as “showing respect, love, reverence, or adoration.” Based on the dictionary, no clear difference between veneration and worship exists. In fact, veneration and worship are often used as synonyms for each other.

But dictionary definitions are not the point. It does not matter what it is called. The Bible nowhere instructs followers of Jesus Christ to offer worship, veneration, adoration, or anything similar to anyone but God. Nowhere does the New Testament describe any followers of Jesus Christ worshiping, venerating, or adoring anyone other than God. They did not receive worship, either. Peter refused to receive adoration from Cornelius (Acts 10:25–26), and Paul and Barnabas were equally adamant that the people of Lystra not venerate them (Acts 14:15). Twice in the Book of Revelation (Revelation 19:10; 22:8), the apostle John begins to worship an angel, and the angel instructs him, “Worship God!” Mary and the saints who have gone to heaven before us would say the same thing: “Worship God!”

The Catholic Church has different degrees of worship: dulia, hyper dulia, and latria. Dulia is the honor given to the saints. Hyper dulia is the honor given to Mary alone, as the greatest of the saints. Latria is the honor given to God alone. In contrast, the Bible always ascribes honor, in the context of worship, to God alone (1 Chronicles 29:11; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:16; Revelation 4:11; 5:13). Even if there were biblical support for different levels of worship, there still would be no biblical support for offering lower/lesser levels of worship to anyone other than God.

Only God is worthy of worship, adoration, praise (Nehemiah 9:6; Revelation 4:11; 15:4), and veneration, no matter how it is defined. Mary’s worth comes from the fact that God chose her for a glorious role and saved her from her sins through the death of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:47). The saints’ worth comes from the fact that God saved them, transformed them, and then used them in mighty and amazing ways. May we all, with Mary and the saints, fall on our knees and worship the only One who is worthy.

## 25. Roman Catholic Church Structure

### Offices

- 1 Pope
- 150-200 Cardinals
- 4700 Bishops
- 400,000 Priests

### *The Catechism on the Pope*

- For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church, has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church
- Supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful
- (His) infallibility extends as far as the deposit of divine Revelation itself
- Elected by Cardinals in conclave
- Successor of Peter (882-891, paragraph numbers of the Catholic Catechism)

### *The Catechism on the Magisterium (the teaching body of the Church)*

- The pastoral duty of the Magisterium is aimed at seeing to it that the People of God abide in the truth
- To fulfill this service, Christ endowed the Church's shepherds with the charism of infallibility in matters of faith and morals
- Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others
- Working together...they all contribute...effectively to the salvation of souls (890, 95)

# 26. The 7 Sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church

## [The 7 Sacraments](#)

- Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Marriage, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick

## [The Catechism on the Sacraments](#)

- The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation
- “Sacramental grace” is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament (1129)

## [The Catechism on Baptism](#)

- The baptized have “put on Christ” Baptism is a bath that purifies, justifies, and sanctifies
- The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation...for those to whom the gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament
- The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude
- Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible mark of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation (1228, 1257, 1272)

## [The Catechism on Confirmation](#)

- Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation”
- Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace
- Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace
  - it unites us more fully to Christ
  - it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
  - it renders our bond with the Church more perfect
  - it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit
- The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time (1285, 1303, 1306)

## [The Catechism on the Eucharist](#)

- At the Last Supper...our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages. The Eucharist is the “source & summit of the Christian life.” The other sacraments are...bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented to it.
- The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice. “The victim is one and the same...the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner...is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner. (1323-4, 1367)
- It is by conversion of the bread and wine into Christ’s body that Christ becomes present in the sacrament
- This change the holy Catholic Church has...called transubstantiation
- Worship of the Eucharist. We express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord
- To receive communion is to receive Christ (1375-8, 1382)
- The fruits of Holy Communion
  - augments our union with Christ
  - separates us from sin
  - wipes away venial sin
  - preserves us from future mortal sins
  - unites us more closely to Christ & the Church
  - commits us to the poor

- The Eucharist & unity of Christians
  - Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation...have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders
  - Inter-communion with these communities is not possible (1391-1400)

#### *Understanding Catholicism on Reconciliation*

- The person going to confession does the following:
  - Tells sins to the priest
  - Expresses true sorrow
  - Makes a firm commitment to change
  - Prays the act of contrition
  - Performs the penance given
- In turn, the priest:
  - Extends the forgiveness of Christ through the Church
  - Determines the reparation or penance (p.151)
- For Heaven's Sake! Remember you won't be forgiven if you aren't really sorry, if you don't do your penance, and if you don't have an honest intention to make a really big effort not to do it again! (p.153)

#### *The Catechism on Reconciliation*

- Sins are rightly evaluated according to their gravity. The distinction between mortal and venial sin, already evident in Scripture (1 John 5:16-17) became part of the tradition of the Church. It is corroborated by human experience.
- For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: a grave matter, committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent
- Mortal sin destroys charity in the heart &...necessitates a new initiative of God's mercy and a conversion of heart which is normally accomplished within the setting of the sacrament of reconciliation (1854-7)
- Through the sacraments of initiation, man receives new life in Christ...This new life as a child of God can be weakened and even lost by sin
- The sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation is also known as Confession, Conversion, or Forgiveness
- By the priest's sacramental absolution God grants the penitent pardon and peace (1420-4)
- Many Forms of Penance in Christian Life
  - The interior penance of the Christian can be expressed in many and various ways. Scripture and the Fathers insist above all on 3 forms: fasting, prayer and almsgiving
  - Alongside the radical purification brought about by Baptism or martyrdom, they cite as means of obtaining forgiveness of sins: efforts at reconciliation with one's neighbor, tears of repentance, concern for the salvation of one's neighbor, the intercession of the saints, and the practice of charity "which covers a multitude of sins"
- Without being strictly necessary, confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church (1434, 1458)
- Satisfaction
  - Absolution takes away sin, but it does not remedy all the disorders sin has caused. The sinner must still recover his full spiritual health by doing something more to make amends for the sin: he must "make satisfaction for" or "expiate" his sins. This is called "penance."
- Penance...can consist of prayer, an offering, works of mercy, service of neighbor, voluntary self-denial, sacrifices, and above all the patient acceptance of the cross we must bear (1459-60)
- Indulgences
  - Indulgences are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of Penance
  - An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven

- An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part of all of the temporal punishment
- Indulgences may be applied to the living or dead
- Through indulgences
  - the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory (1471, 1498)
- Indulgences & the Punishments of Sin
  - Sin has a double consequence. Grave sin deprives us of communion with God and therefore makes us incapable of eternal life
  - On the other hand every sin, even venial...must be purified whether here on earth or after death in the state called Purgatory
  - The forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of eternal punishment for sin, but temporal punishment remains...the Christian must strive to accept this temporal punishment of sin as a grace (1472-3)
- In the Communion of Saints
  - The Christian who seeks to purify himself of his sin and become holy with the help of God's grace is not alone
  - A perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth
  - Between them there is an abundant exchange of all good things. In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others
  - Thus the recourse to the communion of saints lets the contrite sinner be more promptly and efficaciously purified
  - We call these spiritual goods the Church's treasury...This treasury includes as well the prayers and good works of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They are truly immense, unfathomable, and even pristine in their value before God.
  - In the treasury, too, are the prayers and good works of all the saints, all those who...have made their lives holy...In this way they attained their own salvation and at the same time cooperated in saving their brothers (1474-7)

## 27. What are Sacramentals?

Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer, they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it (1670)

### The Sacramentals

Stations of the cross	Anointing with holy oil
Crucifixes	Holy water
Scapulars	Ashes on the forehead
Miraculous medals	Ringing bells
Genuflecting	Observing holy days
Lighting candles	Blessed palms
Statues	Blessed throats
Pictures of the Saints	Blessing of a new car
The sign of the cross	Blessing of salt
Exorcisms	Blessing of pets

A fascinating website about the *Sabbatine Privilege* ► [philomena.org/scapular.asp](http://philomena.org/scapular.asp):  
 “The *Sabbatine Privilege* consists of Our Lady's promise to release from Purgatory, through her special intercession, on the first Saturday after their death, those who meet these three requirements: (1) You must wear the Scapular; (2) You must observe chastity according to your state of life; and (3) You must recite daily the Little Office of Our Blessed Mother.”

► See also “[Approved Scapulars](#)” and “[Why](#)”

# 28. What is the Rosary?

## The Catechism on Prayer

- Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray. Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray (paragraph 2650).

From: [rosarycenter.org/homepage-2/rosary/what-is-the-rosary/](http://rosarycenter.org/homepage-2/rosary/what-is-the-rosary/)

- "In recent times the Mother of God has appeared in various parts of the world and asked for the recitation of the Rosary, the prayer she gave to the world centuries ago. It is her favorite prayer, for it is essentially a meditation on the life of her Divine Son. The Rosary is a combination of vocal prayer (the Our Fathers & Hail Marys) and of mental prayer, namely, reflection on important events in the life of Christ and His Mother.
- "When one refers to the Rosary, it is usually understood to mean five decades, or one fourth of the entire Rosary. While many Catholics pray five decades of the Rosary each day, there is a considerable number who pray fifteen or twenty decades daily."

From: [saintpaulcatholicchurchpocahontas.com/rosary.html](http://saintpaulcatholicchurchpocahontas.com/rosary.html)



# Is Praying the Rosary Scriptural?

From: [gotquestions.org/praying-rosary.html](http://gotquestions.org/praying-rosary.html)

Praying the rosary is promoted within the Catholic Church as a means of strengthening one's faith, resisting evil, growing spiritually, and generally benefiting society. While some of the prayer of the rosary is scriptural, the whole second half of the "Hail Mary" and portions of the "Hail, Holy Queen" are blatantly unbiblical. While the first part of the Hail Mary is almost a direct quotation from Luke 1:28, there is no scriptural basis for (1) praying to Mary, (2) addressing her as "holy," or (3) calling her "our life" and "our hope."

Praying the rosary involves giving attributes to Mary that the Bible never gives her. To call Mary "holy"—the Catholic Church teaches that Mary never sinned or had any taint of original sin—is not biblical. The Bible calls all believers "saints," which can be interpreted as "holy ones," but Scripture says that the righteousness believers have is the imputed righteousness from Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). In this life, no one is yet sanctified from sin in practice (1 John 1:9—2:1). Jesus is called our Savior repeatedly in Scripture because He saved us from our sin. In Luke 1:47, Mary calls God her "Savior." Savior from what? A sinless person does not need a Savior. Sinners need a Savior. Mary acknowledged that God was her Savior. Therefore, Mary acknowledged that she was a sinner.

Jesus came to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). The Roman Catholic Church claims that Mary was saved from sin differently from everyone else—that she was saved from sin through the immaculate conception (her being conceived free of sin). But is this teaching scriptural? The Roman Catholic Church openly admits that this doctrine is not found in Scripture. When a young man addressed Jesus as "good Master" (Matthew 19:16–17), Jesus asked why he called Him "good" since there is none good but one, God. Jesus was trying to make the young man aware that he was using the term good too loosely. In praying the rosary, Catholics use the term holy too loosely. No one, including Mary, is holy but God. This ties in with Romans 3:10–23, Romans 5:12, and countless other passages that stress the fact that in God's eyes no one measures up. Never is Mary excluded from such all-encompassing statements.

But praying the rosary has an even more basic problem, namely, that much of the prayer is directed to Mary, not to God. We are never told in the Bible whether anyone else in heaven can even hear us. God alone is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-present. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He taught them to address their prayers to God the Father. Every example of prayer in the Bible is addressed to God alone. There is never a single example of someone praying to any "saint" or angel or anyone else (besides prayers to false gods). Further, any time that a pious person prostrates himself (in a religious setting) to honor someone else besides God (chiefly to the apostles or angels), he is told to get up, to stop it (Acts 10:25–26; 14:13–16; Matthew 4:10; Revelation 19:10; 22:8–9). The Roman Catholic Church states that it worships God alone but "venerates" Mary and the saints. What is the difference? A person praying the rosary spends more time calling out to Mary than to God. For every one praise of God in the rosary, there are ten praises of Mary!

Praying the rosary also assigns a task to Mary that the Bible never assigns her. Jesus is our Redeemer (Galatians 3:13; 4:4–5; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Revelation 5:9), our heavenly Advocate (1 John 2:1), and our one and only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). The "Hail, Holy Queen" portion of the rosary prayer calls Mary our "most gracious advocate." This is a direct contradiction of the clear biblical teaching that only Jesus is our go-between.

Praying the rosary requires Catholics to call upon Mary as the "holy Queen." The only time in Scripture that the title "Queen of Heaven" is found, the term is used in a negative way (Jeremiah 7:17–19; 44:16–27). The Bible never pictures Mary as a queen; rather, she calls herself "the Lord's servant" (Luke 1:38). She is never given a crown or authority over heaven and earth. Likewise, is it appropriate, while praying the rosary, to call Mary our "life" and "hope"? Again, these are terms that are used of God alone in Scripture (John 1:1–14; Colossians 3:4; 1 Timothy 1:1; Ephesians 2:12; Titus 2:13).

The practice of saying the rosary runs contrary to Scripture in a number of ways. Only God can hear our prayers. Only God can answer our prayers. We have one intermediary (Jesus), and it is in His name we pray, not Mary's.

## 29. What is a Novena?

From: [gotquestions.org/what-is-a-novena.html](http://gotquestions.org/what-is-a-novena.html)

The word novena derives from the Latin word for “nine.” A novena is a series of prayers prayed over a nine-day or nine-hour period. The prayers are repeated to obtain special graces or as a sign of devotion to God. Usually a novena involves making a specific request or expressing a specific intent. Prayers may come from the rosary or from prayer books, or they may be written by the petitioner. Usually the same prayer is prayed every day for nine days, or the same series of prayers is prayed. A nine-day novena has prayers made at the same time each day; a nine-hour novena has a prayer at the same time each hour. Novenas are primarily practiced by Catholics, although some members of the Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran churches also say novenas.

There are, in general, four categories of novenas. **Mourning** novenas are said following the death of a loved one; a special *novemdiales* is said following the death of a pope. **Preparation** novenas are said before a major religious holiday, such as Easter or Christmas. **Prayer** novenas are said to obtain special graces, and may consist of prayers from prayer books, recitation of the rosary, or other small prayers through the day.

**Indulgence** novenas are prayed to alleviate the temporal punishment for one’s sins, including the sins of those in purgatory. Novenas are often prayed to specific saints and may be public or private; public ones require special mass attendance or the daily lighting of a candle. The supposed efficacy of a novena depends on the piety and devotion of the individual performing it. Most Catholics resent the superstitious supposition that a novena is a sort of spiritual chain letter, the idea that saying a novena for a given amount of time virtually guarantees that one’s request will be granted.

The novena is perhaps loosely derived from Scripture. It is thought that the time between the ascension of the Lord Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was nine days. Acts 1:14 says that the disciples spent that time continuing “with one accord in prayer.” However, the ancient Romans also observed a nine-day period of prayer following the death of a loved one, or to avert some evil predicted by a soothsayer.

Ultimately, the novena is based more on tradition than on Scripture, which contains a prohibition against “vain repetition” in prayer (Matthew 6:7-8). The concept behind novenas is not explicitly unbiblical, but the prayer content in the vast majority of novenas is unbiblical. It is true that we are exhorted to pray continually (Luke 18:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). However, we need to be sure that our prayers are thoughtful, God-centered, and God-honoring.

## 30. What is a Relic?

From [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relic): “A relic is an object or article of religious significance from the past, it usually consists of the physical remains of a saint or the personal effects of the saint or venerated person preserved for purposes of veneration as a tangible memorial. Relics are an important aspect of some forms of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Shamanism, and many other religions.”

The book, *Understanding Catholicism*, says: “Nobody knows when the practice of selling indulgences began, but it blossomed during the 1400s and 1500s. Relics of the saints were often displayed for a price and sometimes sold. Relics were a popular religious sacramental of the time. They consisted of pieces of wood, said to be from the authentic cross, or pieces of cloth, hair, or bone that were believed to belong to one of the saints.”

At the website [A Catholic Guide to Relics](http://www.catholicrelics.org/) you can see photos of relics. As it says, “The picture above depicts the holy relics kept at the Roman Basilica Santa Croce in Gerusalemme: Fragments of the True Cross, a nail from the crucifixion, two thorns from Our Lord’s Crown, part of the panel nailed to His Cross with the word ‘Nazarene’, and a bone from St. Thomas’ index finger.”