



## PUTTING OUR FAITH INTO PRACTICE: TERMS AND TRADITIONS

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### TALK 12

Please refer to your “Prayers and Practices” brochure, which brings together at a glance basic Catholic teachings, prayers, and traditions -- many of which have been covered in this course. We can take a few moments now to recap and integrate some of the key elements.

**The *Apostles’ Creed*:** Formulated during the early years of Christianity, the *Apostles’ Creed* concisely states the core truths of the Catholic faith. Its structure is based on the Holy Trinity: “the first part speaks of the first divine Person and the wonderful work of creation; the next speaks of the second divine Person and the mystery of his redemption of men; the final part speaks of the third divine Person, the origin and source of our sanctification” (CCC 190).

**The Ten Commandments:** The Ten Commandments “express man’s fundamental duties towards God and towards his neighbor” (CCC 2072). They constitute “a privileged expression of the natural law” (CCC 2070) -- in other words, they are obligations that for the most part we can sense and realize using just our reason. But since humanity needed “a complete and certain understanding of the requirements of the natural law” (CCC 2071), God revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. Jesus summed them up in the two greatest commandments: Love God with all of your heart, mind, and soul; and love your neighbor just as you love yourself. The Ten Commandments are:

1. You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep the Lord’s Day holy.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.

**The Precepts of the Church:** In addition, the Church has established precepts to ensure that the faithful maintain an indispensable minimum in their spirit of prayer and moral effort to grow in the love of God and neighbor. The six precepts of the Church in the U.S. are:

1. Attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation, and use these days to rest from servile labor.
2. Confess your sins at least once a year.
3. Receive the Eucharist in Holy Communion at least once during the Easter season.
4. Observe the days of fast and abstinence prescribed by the Church.
5. Provide for the material needs of the Church.
6. Observe the laws of the Church concerning marriage.



## Moms Transmit the Faith

**Church Holy Days of Obligation (in the United States):** All Sundays. In addition, the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God (January 1); Ascension Thursday; the Assumption of Our Lady (August 15); All Saints Day (November 1); the Immaculate Conception (December 8); and Christmas Day (December 25). (**Note:** Since the feast of the Ascension is a transferable feast, in many U.S. dioceses it has been transferred to the following Sunday, meaning that Mass attendance is not required in those dioceses on that Thursday. But if it has not been transferred in your diocese, then Mass attendance is required on Ascension Thursday.)

**Virtue:** “A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself” (CCC 1803). The person who does what is good acts according to human nature, while the one who does what is evil acts against it. Thus, virtues are simply good habits that are “consonant with our nature”, as St. Augustine taught.

**Human Virtues:** Human virtues aim toward natural ends. Therefore, anyone can achieve them, Christians and non-Christians alike. Doing so, however, requires serious effort. A human virtue can be either intellectual or moral, depending on which faculty of the soul it resides in. The intellectual virtues reside in the intellect and aim at truth. The moral virtues reside in the will and aim at goodness.

**The Four Cardinal Virtues:** There are four key virtues that support all of the other human virtues. They are: prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Prudence is an intellectual virtue, while the other three cardinal virtues are moral virtues.

**The Three Theological Virtues:** The theological virtues aim toward God Himself; therefore, they are supernatural. The three theological virtues are faith, hope, and charity. They are infused in the soul at Baptism. Since they are freely given by God, it takes no effort from us to acquire them; however, we do need to work at developing the theological virtues by exercising them and by receiving the Sacraments. In that sense, the theological virtues are like teeth and muscles: like teeth because, while we already have them, we can lose them by neglect; and like muscles because, while we already have them, they remain undeveloped if we don't use them.

**The Seven Capital Sins & The Seven Heavenly Virtues:** The early Christians identified seven “deadly” sins that eventually destroy the life of grace and place the soul in mortal danger. They are: lust; gluttony; greed; sloth; wrath; envy; and pride. But each is opposed by a “heavenly” virtue: chastity opposes lust; temperance opposes gluttony; charity opposes greed; diligence opposes sloth; patience opposes wrath; kindness opposes envy; and humility opposes pride.

**The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:** Received at Baptism together with sanctifying grace and the theological virtues, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit make us responsive to grace so that we can live virtuously. They predispose us to holiness the more we deepen our receptivity to them. They are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

Fear of the Lord does not mean being afraid of God. It means loving God by not wanting to offend Him. The Pope, the U.S. President, and other VIPs command and deserve our respect. But no one deserves respect like God does. Here are some ways to show respect for God in church:



1. Make the Sign of the Cross reverently.
2. Genuflect upon entering church to acknowledge Christ's presence.
3. Use holy water upon entering a church because it is a holy place, the house of God.
4. When lit, the sanctuary lamp shows that Our Lord is present in the tabernacle.
5. Remain composed in church, as it is a house of prayer.
6. Dress properly when going to church.

**The Fruits of the Holy Spirit:** If we use the gifts of the Holy Spirit well and behave virtuously, then we will be able to enjoy the good results, called “fruits” of the Holy Spirit. The twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity.

**The Corporal Works of Mercy:** The Latin word “corpus” means “body”. The Corporal Works of Mercy involve attending to the material needs of one’s neighbors. They are: feeding the hungry; giving drink to the thirsty; clothing the naked; sheltering the homeless; visiting the sick; visiting those in prison; and burying the dead.

**The Spiritual Works of Mercy:** The Spiritual Works of Mercy involve attending to the spiritual needs of one’s neighbors. They are: admonishing sinners; instructing the ignorant; counseling the doubtful; comforting the sorrowful; bearing wrongs patiently; forgiving injuries; and praying for the living and the dead.

**The Four Last Things:** A Christian should be always mindful of the four last things: death, judgment, heaven, and hell.

**The Eight Beatitudes:** What does it mean to have a “Christian spirit”? It means seeing the world as Christ sees it, and reacting to circumstances the way Christ would. Jesus summarized the Christian spirit in the Sermon on the Mount when He gave us the Eight Beatitudes. They are:

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.
8. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**The Seven Sacraments:** A sacrament of the Church is defined as “an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace” (*Baltimore Catechism*). Since man is a union of body and soul, the outward signs include material elements that represent the spiritual realities involved in the sacraments. The Seven Sacraments of the Church are: Baptism; Confirmation; Holy Eucharist; Penance (or Reconciliation); Holy Orders; Matrimony; and the Anointing of the Sick.



## Moms Transmit the Faith

Following are suggested brief comments about some of the prayers included in the “Prayers and Practices” brochure. (All of the other pages in this talk are meant to be run off and handed out to each mom. This page is the exception, as it is intended to support the presenter.)

***Morning Offering*** -- Begin every day by offering it to God.

***The Our Father*** -- When the Apostles asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He taught them this great prayer to God our Father.

***The Hail Mary*** -- A prayer to Our Lady made up of the Angel Gabriel’s greeting to her at the Annunciation; St. Elizabeth’s praise of her at the Visitation; and a petition for her intercession.

***The Glory Be*** -- A prayer of praise to the Blessed Trinity.

***Angel of God*** -- A prayer to your Guardian Angel, who is a great friend.

***The Angelus*** -- A mid-day prayer to Our Lady. We can take this opportunity to ask ourselves: Am I doing God’s Will today? What more can I do for Him this afternoon?

***Act of Contrition*** -- An expression of sorrow for sinning and a pledge to make amendment.

***Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love*** -- Prayers for growth in the theological virtues.

***The Memorare*** -- A prayer to Mary composed by St. Bernard asking for her intercession.

***Prayer to St. Joseph*** -- Mary’s humble and quiet husband is a master of the interior life.



Here are some common Catholic terms and popular devotions:

**Absolution:** The words spoken by the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation by which he, in God's name, forgives the confessing person's sins.

**Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:** Since Christ Himself -- Body and Soul -- is truly present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we adore His divine presence. During formal Adoration, the Blessed Sacrament is displayed for the people to worship and venerate.

**Amen:** A Hebrew word meaning "truly", or "it is true". As the concluding word of prayers, it expresses assent to and acceptance of God's Will.

**Apostle/Apostolate:** The word "apostle" literally means "one who is sent". In particular, it refers to the original twelve men Jesus chose to be His immediate followers. He commissioned them to preach the Gospel to all mankind. The "apostolate" refers to all kinds and areas of work or endeavor to serve God and the Church by making Christ's life and message known to others.

**Atonement:** Means "to be reconciled" or "to be set at one". It refers to making due payment for an offense. The suffering and death of Christ the Redeemer made adequate atonement to God for the sins of the whole human race. But as sinners, we are invited to offer our own sufferings in union with His to atone for our sins and the sins of the world.

**Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament:** During Adoration, the consecrated Host is displayed on the altar in a special vessel called a monstrance. Benediction takes place when the priest blesses the people with the raised monstrance in the form of a cross.

**Cathedral:** The main church within an archdiocese or diocese. It holds the seat (an actual chair) of the local bishop.

**Clergy:** Collective term referring to the men who, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, are part of the Church's ordained ministry (i.e. bishops, priests, and deacons).

**Consecration:** The prayer within the Canon of the Mass whereby the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Jesus Christ (*transubstantiation*).

**Conscience:** The faculty of the practical intellect that judges upon the goodness or badness of a way of acting that a person is considering.

**Cross/Crucifix:** Symbolic representation of the means of Our Lord's execution. It is a crucifix only if it depicts the figure of Christ on a cross; otherwise it is simply a cross.

**Diocese:** A territorial Church jurisdiction under the pastoral care of a bishop.

**Divine Mercy Devotion:** In the 1930s, Our Lord appeared to St. Maria Faustina and asked her to be the apostle of His Divine Mercy. In the Divine Mercy devotion, we are called to an understanding that God's love is unlimited and available to everyone -- especially to the greatest sinners. The Divine Mercy feast day is celebrated on the Sunday after Easter. The devotion includes a special image of Christ, a prayer chaplet (similar to the *Rosary*), and a nine-day novena. (<http://www.ewtn.com/devotionals/mercy/index.htm>)

**Doctrine/Dogma:** Doctrine is any teaching promoted by the Church's teaching authority on matters of faith and morals (the *Magisterium*), which is therefore necessary for acceptance



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by the faithful. Dogma is doctrine that is formally defined as being a part of Divine Revelation.

**Encyclical Letter:** A pastoral letter addressed by the Pope to the whole Church.

**Evangelization:** Proclamation of the Gospel in order to bring others to Christ and His Church. Proper evangelization should have three distinct fruits: (1) a personal interior conversion to Christ and His Church that (2) affects not only the individual person, but the surrounding culture as well, so that (3) the culture and its institutions reflect the teachings of Christ.

**Forty Hours Devotion:** Solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for forty hours, in honor of the forty hours the sacred body of Jesus is believed to have rested in the tomb.

**Free Will:** The faculty or capability of the human will to make a reasonable choice from among several alternatives without compulsion from within or coercion from without.

**Freedom:** The faculty or capability of the human will to choose the good. As the intellect is perfected not only in thinking, but in knowing the truth, so freedom is perfected not only in choosing, but in choosing the good.

**The Immaculate Conception:** The Catholic dogma which holds that Mary was without sin from the first moment she was conceived. The feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated in her honor on December 8.

**Immaculate Heart Devotion:** Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary focuses on Mary's great love for God and encourages us to emulate her love, and to ask for her intercession.

**The Incarnation:** The union of the Son of God's divine nature with a human nature at the moment of Christ's conception in the womb of Mary. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was made flesh and dwelt among us as one of us for the purpose of redeeming us.

**Indulgence:** The remission before God of the temporal punishment that one owes for sins that are already forgiven. Plenary indulgences remove all of the temporal punishment owed for forgiven sin, while partial indulgences remove only some. To gain a plenary indulgence either for oneself or for a soul in purgatory requires that we perform some act of piety; pray for the Pope; hold the intention of being detached from all sin; and receive both Holy Communion and Reconciliation within the specified timeframe before or after the day the indulgence is granted. Partial indulgences can be earned through acts of piety which the Church recommends.

**The Holy Mass:** During Holy Mass, Christ's sacrifice on the cross is renewed in an "unbloody manner". Though thousands of Masses are said around the world each day, only one sacrifice is offered -- the one Our Lord made of His life on Calvary to redeem us. The Mass is an event that overcomes the boundaries of space and time. People in many different places at different times come into direct contact at Mass with the one perfect act of love that Christ made on the Cross.

**Mortification:** The subjection and denial of bodily passions and appetites through abstinence or self-inflicted pain or discomfort. Also, the cheerful acceptance and enduring of unsought sufferings and setbacks. The spiritual practice of mortification ("dying" to oneself



to grow in God's grace) is akin to the worldly practice of "asceticism" (a Greek word which means "bodily exercise" or "athletic training").

**Papal Infallibility:** The result of divine assistance given to the Pope whereby he is prevented from the possibility of error in teachings involving Church dogma on matters of faith and morals.

**Parish:** A geographic boundary within a diocese that has its own church building and is under the authority of a priest called its pastor. A pastor is responsible for administering the sacraments and teaching Church doctrine to the people, among other services.

**The Lord's Passion:** The events surrounding the Suffering and Death of Jesus Christ. The Passion is central to the religious observance of Holy Week in the Church.

**Penance:** The virtue or disposition of heart by which one repents of one's own sins and is converted to God. It is also the means by which one attempts to make some reparation for sins committed either by oneself or by others. Thirdly, Penance also serves as another name for the Sacrament of Confession.

**Piety:** Honor and reverence due to those in any way responsible for one's existence or well-being. We therefore owe piety to God as our Creator and constant Provider, as well as to our parents, near relatives, country, tribe, or people.

**Pope:** Title of the visible head of the Catholic Church. He is called the "Pope" (a child's word for "father") because his authority is supreme and because it is to be exercised in a paternal way, after the example of Christ.

**Religion:** Adoration and service of God expressed through divine worship and acts of faith in daily life.

**The *Rosary*:** A devotional prayer, that is both mental and vocal, honoring the Blessed Mother. It focuses on events in the lives of Mary and Jesus, and entails repeating the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be. Traditionally, the *Rosary* is said with a physical circlet of beads.

**Sacred Heart Devotion:** The heart has always been seen as the "center" or essence of a person and the wellspring of our emotional lives and love. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is devotion to Jesus Christ Himself, but in particular by way of meditating on the threefold love with which He unceasingly loves His eternal Father and all mankind -- His divine love, the burning love of His human will, and His sensible love. Devotion to the Sacred Heart involves consecration and reparation. We consecrate ourselves to Christ by repenting and resolving to serve Him as King of Kings; and we make reparations for the indifference and ingratitude with which He is treated by humanity. The month of June is devoted to the Sacred Heart, and the feast of the Sacred Heart is celebrated on the Friday following the second Sunday after Pentecost. The devotion includes going to Confession and receiving the Eucharist on the First Friday of each month for nine months; attending a holy hour of Eucharistic Adoration on Thursdays; and a variety of novenas and other traditional prayers and acts of piety. (<http://www.fisheaters.com/sh.html>)

**Sacred Scripture:** Sacred Scripture (i.e. the Bible) is the Word of God -- the Truth in written form. It contains a collection of books inspired by the Holy Spirit that reveal the



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Truth to us about God and His Will for men. The Bible is composed of the Old and the New Testaments. The 46 books in the Old Testament record the words and deeds of God before the coming of Christ. The 27 books in the New Testament include the four Gospel accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; the Acts of the Apostles; several epistles; and the Book of Revelation.

**Sacred Tradition:** The Word of God (i.e. the Truth) is undoubtedly revealed in the Bible. But the Word of God is not solely constituted of the words written in Sacred Scripture. There are also unwritten truths concerning faith and morals that God has revealed through what is called Sacred Tradition. Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are inseparable; only together do they fully comprise the whole of Divine Revelation, which the Second Vatican Council defined as everything handed on by the Apostles “which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith of the People of God” (*Dei Verbum*, 8). Sacred Tradition is simply everything other than Sacred Scripture that was handed on by the Apostles which contributes to our holiness of life and increase in faith.

**Scapulars and medals:** A “scapular” is a two-sided medal or an outer garment consisting of two strips of cloth joined across the shoulders. Its history is rooted in the monastic habit, and it symbolizes the “yoke” of Christ. A commonly worn scapular is the brown one devoted to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Many Catholics also wear medals to invoke the help of Our Lady or of particular saints. The Miraculous Medal is one example. It is important to remember that religious articles are only meant to serve as physical reminders of grace and should never be treated as having “magical” or superstitious properties.

**Tabernacle:** The vessel in a Catholic church where the Eucharist is housed.

**Theology:** The study of God and religion, deriving from and based on the data of Divine Revelation, systematized according to an academic method.

**Transubstantiation:** The complete change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ’s Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, during the prayer of consecration spoken at Holy Mass by a validly ordained priest.

**The Blessed Trinity:** The central doctrine of the Christian religion which holds that God, who is one and unique in His infinite nature, is at the same time three distinct Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The three divine Persons are co-equal, co-eternal, consubstantial, and co-equally deserving of glory and adoration. And still, there is only one God -- the three Persons subsisting in the one divine nature.

**Vatican II:** The twenty-first ecumenical council of the Catholic Church. It was convoked by Pope John XXIII in October, 1962 and closed under Pope Paul VI in November, 1965. The meeting in Rome of Church leaders and theologians was convened to discuss the proper relationship of the Church to the modern world. A key teaching proclaimed by the Council fathers is the “universal call to holiness” -- the fact that all people, whether lay or religious, are called to become holy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the definitions for the “common Catholic terms and popular devotions” are taken from either the *Modern Catholic Dictionary* by Fr. John Hardon or the Catholic glossary page on the website of the Archdiocese of St. Louis: <http://archstl.org/becomingcatholic/page/catholic-glossary>. Minor reference support was also supplied by Webster’s Dictionary and Wikipedia: <http://www.wikipedia.org/>.