



Pentecost Sunday

May 15, 2016 C

- ◆ **Seven Sessions on the Catechism begins this Wednesday, May 11, at 7:00pm in the Parish Hall**
- ◆ **Pentecost—Birthday of the Church**
- ◆ **Census Card**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the official summary of Catholic beliefs, a 600+ page book published in the early 90's.

The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults is the American version of the universal catechism. This 500+ page book was published in 2006. The *United States Catechism* is a much more user-friendly read.

I have written 28 articles on the Four Pillars of the Catechism: Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer. The articles are found on our parish website and have the endorsement of Cardinal Wuerl, Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

Beginning this Wednesday, in the parish hall, I will have the first of seven two-hour sessions on the Catechism using my articles.

As I was writing this column (last Monday), I was not yet sure which articles I would focus on. I was thinking about Catholic Beliefs which our Protestant brothers and sisters have some or a lot of difficulty with. This is what I have in mind now.

Session 1 (this Wednesday): Scripture, Tradition and the Church

This lesson is very important because it shows why Catholic beliefs and teachings are not purely based on '*sola scriptura*' (scripture only), which was the great slogan of Martin Luther. This lesson points out that when it comes to reading and studying the Bible, we not only need the help of the Holy Spirit but also that of Tradition and the Church's Magisterium.

We will provide you with a folder containing a copy of each article that will be discussed. You bring a pen or pencil *and* a friend.

Session 2: Creation, Evil, The Fall, Original Sin, Angels and Demons

Session 3: Salvation in Christ. Was it God's will that Jesus die a horrible death? The Cross in our lives. What does "*he descended into hell*" mean? Are you saved? A Catholic response.

Session 4: The Four Marks of the Church. Who will be saved? Will non-Catholics, non-Christians, and non-believers be saved?

Session 5: Mary. Four Catholic beliefs about Mary not generally accepted by non-Catholics.

Session 6: Sacrament of Reconciliation. Is it enough to tell God our sins? Why do we need to tell our sins to another imperfect person?

Session 7: To be announced later

During each session, there will be time for discussion and questions.

Happy Birthday, Church!

Today, we celebrate the birthday of our Church. Catholics believe and teach that the Holy Trinity brought the Church into being. *The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* states:

The Father called the Church into existence.

The Son established the Church.

The Holy Spirit filled the Church with power and wisdom at Pentecost.

The Holy Trinity abides with the Church always, creatively and providentially.

The Church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, brings Christ's salvation to the world.

She is the instrument of God's call to holiness.

At the same time, the Church is made up of sinful people, yet despite the personal sinfulness of her members, the Church remains holy by the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit who permeates her.

A Church of Saint and Sinners

Catholics believe that the Church is both *human* and *divine*. As human, its earthly members are not exempt from sin and will always be in need of purification and interior renewal. In the Catholic Church, this need for ongoing conversion is evident by the presence of confessionals in her churches. We are indeed a “church of sinners.” In fact, if we were to place a sign over the church door as a condition of entry, it would read:

Remember what Jesus said: “*I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners*” (Luke 2:17). The Church’s membership has *always* been imperfect (recall the betrayal of Judas and the denials of Peter), *is* still imperfect, and will undoubtedly remain imperfect until the end of time.

Learning to live with and work in a church with imperfect members can be a faith challenge for many people. Unfortunately, lots of Catholics cannot accept this reality and, for this reason, opt out. Some go church-hopping in hopes of finding the *perfect* church, which is just not attainable.

Despite her many imperfections, the Catholic Church has produced thousands of saints—holy men and women—in every age.

Divine Nature of the Church

Catholics believe that the Church is not only human, but also divine. The Catholic Church believes in its *divine* nature and origin. Our Church was not created by some earthly human being. Our Church was founded by Jesus who promised to be with her until the end of time. Catholics also believe that the Holy Spirit permeates the Church, guiding her and empowering her to continue the work of Jesus here on earth. So while the Church is *always* in need of external reform and internal renewal, she is never in need of *replacement*—the mistake Martin Luther and other Reformers made in the 16th century. What Jesus founded and promised to remain with until the end of time is *never* in need of replacement.

Breath of God

[The Holy Spirit is often referred to as the Breath of God.]

Breathe on me, breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love the things you love,
and do what you would do.
Breathe on me, breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with you I have one will,
to live and to endure.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
my soul with grace refine,
until this earthly part of me
glows with your fire divine.
Breathe on me, breath of God,
so I shall never die,
but live with you the perfect life
in your eternity.

- Midmorning Prayer from Liturgy of the Hours

Listen to what this 92-year old says. Read and share it.

The 92-year old petite, well-poised and proud lady, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o’clock, with her hair fashionably coifed and makeup perfectly applied even though she is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today.

Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary.

After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready. As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her window.

“I love it,” she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy. “Mrs. Jones, you haven’t seen the room ... just wait.”

“That doesn’t have anything to do with it,” she replied. “Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn’t depend on how the furniture is arranged, it’s how I arrange my mind.

“I already decided to love it. It’s a decision I make every morning when I wake up.

“I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do.

“Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open, I’ll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I’ve stored away, just for this time in my life.”

She went on to explain, “Old age is like a bank account, you withdraw from what you’ve put in. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories.

“Thank you for your part in filling my Memory bank. I am still depositing.”

And with a smile, she said: “Remember the five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred.
2. Free your mind from worries.
3. Live simply.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less.”

Ministers to the Sick and Homebound: Be sure you share the above piece with those you visit.

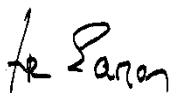
Parish Census—A call to be a visitor for Christ

Today, you had an opportunity to sign up to be a visitor for Christ in your neighborhood or in a nearby neighborhood. If you did not sign up but would like to, fill out the sign-up card and return it to the parish office or place in next Sunday’s collection basket. If we don’t get back to you, assume the card was lost and please contact me at the office.

If you did not sign up, please be a Prayer Warrior for this Pastoral Outreach.

Come, Holy Spirit, on all of us in a new and fresh way.

Have a blessed week,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr Sarah". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.