

Summary of Faith

What a Christian Should Believe and Practice

Ignorance in matters of religion is one of the most fatal evils of our times. In all classes of society there are found, in large numbers, Christians who hardly know the principal truths of salvation, or who have but a vague and confused knowledge of them, intermingled with errors and prejudices. If they are reminded of the obligation which they have of learning the mysteries of faith, their indifference makes them reluctant to hear the Word of God, or to study the doctrines of the Church.

A Christian should never allow himself to participate in that shameful and culpable ignorance, but glory in knowing his religion; and, in order not to forget the principles of this precious science, *often read this summary*, which contains within a few pages, in a clear and concise manner, the most essential truths that a Christian should believe and practice.

I. The Aim of the Catholic Religion Is:

1. To show us the end for which God made us; which is to know, love and serve Him in this life, and to enjoy Him in the next.
2. To indicate to us the means that are necessary to attain the ends for which we are being created, and which are: the exercise of the supernatural virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity; keeping the Commandments of God and of the Church, reception of the Sacraments, and the practice of prayer.

II. The Truths Absolutely Necessary to be Known and Believed , as a Means of Salvation:

1. The principal mysteries of our holy Catholic Faith;
2. That there is a God who will reward the good and punish the wicked.

III. The Principal Mysteries of Our Holy Faith Are:

1. The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity, that is, the mystery of one God in three Divine Persons.
2. The mysteries of the Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. The Truths We Must Believe as Being of Divine Precept Are:

1. The Apostles' Creed;

2. The Lord's Prayer and the Angelic Salutation;
3. The Commandments of God and of His Church;
4. The Sacrament of Baptism, which any of the faithful may find himself in the case to administer; the Sacrament of Penance and Eucharist, and the other Sacraments for those who are obliged to receive them;
5. The duties of our particular state of life.

Concerning all the truths, which he is not held bound to know, it suffices for the Christian to believe, in a general manner, all that the Church believes and teaches.

V. The Church is the Society of the Faithful United:

1. By professing the same faith;
2. By participating in the same sacraments;
3. By being united under the same visible head who is the Pope.

VI. The True Church Has Four Marks:

1. One;
2. Holy;
3. Catholic;
4. Apostolic.

VII. The Church Has Two Prerogatives:

1. Infallibility in her teaching; and
2. Perpetuity in her duration.

VIII. The Church Is Composed of Two Distinct Bodies:

1. The Church *teaching*, that is, the Pope and bishops;
2. The Church *taught*, that is, the priests and the faithful.

IX. All the Revealed Truths Taught by the Church Are Contained In:

1. The Holy Scriptures; and
2. Sacred Tradition.

X. In addition to the “Revealed Truths” that are taught by the Church, there are four other criteria that must be used to test her actions:

1. The works of the Church Fathers
2. The works of the Church Doctors;
3. The works of “*eminens theologiae*” (i.e. correct theological reasoning as determined by the principal *ratio illuminata fide*;
4. *Lex credens* or *vox populi*.

XI. The Church Gives Her Infallible and Sovereign Decisions:

1. By an ecumenical or general council acting under the guidance and in obedience to the Holy Father; or
2. By the Pope alone.

XII. An Ecumenical, or General, Council is That:

1. Wherein all the bishops are convoked by the Pope,
2. Which is presided over by the Pope or his delegates,
3. Which is approved by the Pope.

XIII. The Pope, Successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Jesus Christ, Possesses:

1. The primacy of jurisdiction over all the bishops and the faithful;
2. Infallibility in his formal dogmatical decisions.

Note: The infallibility of the Pope was defined as an Article of Faith in the fourth session of the Council of the Vatican on July 18, 1870. Whoever refuses to admit this dogma is guilty of the sin of heresy.

XIV. The Pope, as Temporal Sovereign, Possesses:

1. All the rights of an independent sovereign with regard to his subjects;
2. All the rights of an independent sovereign with regard to other states.

Note: In the actual condition of the Church, the temporal power of the Pope is requisite for the free exercise of his spiritual sovereignty. It cannot be attacked without incurring the censures of the Church.

XV. There Are Two Kinds of Grace:

1. Habitual, or sanctifying, grace, which dwells in our soul and renders it holy and agreeable in the eyes of God;
2. Actual grace, which is an actual help by which God excites and aids us to do good in the order of salvation.

XVI. Through Sanctifying Grace, Man Becomes:

1. The temple of the Holy Spirit;
2. The adopted son of God;
3. The heir of heaven.

XVII. Actual Grace is Necessary:

1. To perform good actions meritorious of heaven;
2. To overcome all temptations;
3. To keep all the precepts of the natural law.

XVIII. A Special Actual Grace is Necessary:

1. To avoid all venial sins;
2. To obtain final perseverance, that is, to die in a state of grace.

XIX. The Seven Sacraments:

1. *Baptism*. Effaces original sin, as well as other sins committed before receiving it, and makes us children of God and of the Church. (Mt. 28:19)

Note: In case of necessity, any of the faithful may and ought to baptize. This is done by pouring natural water on the head of the person to be baptized, so that the water may touch the flesh and the hair only; and while pouring the water, pronouncing distinctly these words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

2. *Confirmation*. Gives us the Holy Spirit with the abundance of His graces, and makes us perfect Christians. (Acts 8:17)
3. *Holy Eucharist*. Is truly and substantially the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ under the species and appearances of bread and wine. (Mt. 26:26)
4. *Penance*. Remits all sins committed after Baptism. (Jn. 20:23)

5. *Extreme Unction*. Is instituted for the spiritual and corporal relief of the sick. (Js. 5:14)
6. *Holy Orders*. Gives to bishops and priests the power to perform the priestly functions, and the grace to exercise them in a holy manner. (Lk. 22:19)
7. *Matrimony*. Sanctifies the legitimate union of husband and wife, and gives them the grace to live a holily, and to bring up their children in the fear and the love of God (Mt. 19:6).

XX. The Three Theological Virtues:

1. *Faith*, by which we believe in God, because He is Truth itself;
2. *Hope*, by which we firmly hope for eternal life and for the means to obtain it, because God is infinitely good and merciful;
3. *Charity*, by which we love God above all things, because He is infinitely amiable; and our neighbor as our self for God's sake.

Note: The Christian is duty bound to make frequent acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

XXI. The Four Cardinal Virtues:

1. Prudence
2. Justice
3. Fortitude
4. Temperance

XXII. The Three Evangelical Counsels

1. Voluntary poverty
2. Perpetual chastity
3. Obedience in all that is not sin

XXIII. The Two Kinds of Sin:

1. *Original Sin*, which we inherit from our first parents and in which we were conceived and born children of wrath;
2. *Actual Sin*, which is any willful thought, word, deed or omission, contrary to the law of God, and which we commit ourselves after having attained the use of reason.

XXIV. Actual Sin is Committed in Four Ways:

1. By thought;
2. By word;
3. By action;
4. By the omission of what we ought to do.

XXV. There are Two Kinds of Actual Sin:

1. *Mortal* sin, which is a grievous transgression against the law of God or of the Church, and deserves the eternal pains of hell. It is called mortal because it kills the soul by depriving it of its true life, which is sanctifying grace.
2. *Venial* sin, which is a light transgression against the law of God or of the Church, and deserves temporal punishment only, to be undergone either in this life or in purgatory. It is called venial, because we can more easily obtain its forgiveness, as it only lessens charity without destroying it.

XXVI. Three Things Are Necessary to Constitute a Mortal Sin:

1. *Gravity of matter*, that is, the thing done must be notably against the law of God or of the Church, or really believed to be such;
2. *Full knowledge*, that is, we must know perfectly that we are doing a great evil;
3. *Perfect consent*, that is, that this evil must be done with free will.

XXVII. Venial Sin Becomes Mortal in Five Cases:

1. When one sins through the formal contempt of the law of the legislator;
2. When the one who commits it believes erroneously that he commits a mortal sin or is disposed to commit it even though it were a mortal sin;
3. When one who sins has in view an end mortally evil;
4. When one foresees that from the venial sin there will result for others some grievous consequence or a great scandal;
5. When venial sin exposes one to the present occasion of sinning mortally.

XXVIII. The Seven Deadly (or Capital) Sins:

1. *Pride*, that opposed to humility;
2. *Avarice*, that opposed to liberality;

3. *Lust*, that opposed to chastity;
4. *Anger*, that opposed to patience;
5. *Envy*, that opposed to fraternal charity;
6. *Gluttony*, that opposed to temperance;
7. *Sloth*, that opposed to diligence and fervor in the service of God.

XXIX. The Three Principal Means to Preserve Chastity:

1. Frequent communion
2. Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin
3. Flight from dangerous occasions.

XXX. The Six Sins Against the Holy Spirit:

1. Despair of salvation
2. Presumption of saving one's self without any merit
3. Impugning the known Catholic truth
4. Envy at another's spiritual good
5. Obstinacy in sin
6. Final impenitence.

XXXI. The Four Sins That Cry to Heaven for Vengeance:

1. Willful murder
2. The sin against nature
3. Taking advantage of the poor
4. Defrauding laborers of their wages.

XXXII. One Becomes Accessory to Another Person's Sins in Ten Ways:

1. By counseling
2. By provoking
3. By commanding
6. By not punishing when it is one's duty
7. By praising
8. By defending

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| 4. By consenting | 9. By partaking |
| 5. By permitting when one is able to prevent | 10. By maintaining silence when one is required to make it known. |

XXXIII. Assuming That One Has Prayed Fervently for the Grace to Know and Detest His Sins, Five Things Are Necessary to Make a Good Confession:

1. *Self-examination*, which consists in making diligent search in our memory for the sins committed since our last good confession.
2. *True sorrow*, which is a lively displeasure for having offended God, and which should be interior, supernatural, universal and sovereign.
3. *Firm purpose*, which is a sincere resolution not to offend God, and which ought to be firm, universal and efficacious.
4. *Confession*, which is the accusation of all our sins to an approved priest, in order to obtain absolution, and which ought to be brief, entire, humble, sincere, and prudent.
5. *Satisfaction, or Penance*, which ought to be entire, prompt, and devout, and should be fulfilled at the time appointed by the confessor, or as soon as possible, if no time is fixed.

XXXIV. We Make Satisfaction to the Divine Justice for Sins Committed by Three Kinds of Good Works:

1. By *prayer*, which comprises all the exercises of religion and piety; such as vocal and mental prayers, the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the pious reception of the sacraments, piously assisting at the Divine Office, and all similar practices.
2. By *fasting*, which comprises all sorts of mortifications, all labors and sufferings both of soul and body, support for the love of God.
3. By *alms giving*, which comprises all works of mercy both spiritual and corporal, and all services rendered to our neighbor for the love of God.

XXXV. A Good Confession Produces Three Effects:

1. It delivers us from the guilt of sin, from the slavery of the devil, and from the pains of hell.
2. It restores to us the friendship of God, peace of soul, and the merits lost by mortal sin.
3. It gives us strength to destroy our evil habits, to overcome temptations, and to practice virtue.

XXXVI. Out of Confession, We Can Obtain the Remissions:

1. Of *venial sins*: by an act of contrition and other acts of piety, charity, such as the assistance at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and recitation of the Lord's Prayer, etc., which obtain for us the love of repentance necessary for the remission of these sins.
2. Of *mortal sins*: by an act of perfect contrition or charity, which includes the firm resolution to receive the sacrament of Penance as soon as possible. (Charity is perfect when we love God above all else because He is infinitely good and amiable);

Note: If you have the misfortune to commit a mortal sin, immediately make an act of contrition, so as not to remain in enmity with God, and thus protect your eternal salvation. Make this act, above all, if being in danger of death, you cannot have a priest hear your confession. Anyone who is aware of having committed a mortal sin must not receive Communion, even if he has made an act of perfect contrition, without having first received sacramental absolution, unless he has a grave reason for receiving Communion and there is no possibility of going to confession.

XXXVII. To Communicate Worthily, Three Things are Necessary:

1. To be in the state of grace;
2. To be fasting;
3. To know that we are going to receive the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

XXXVIII. To Receive Communion Frequently, it is Necessary:

1. To be exempt from all affection for venial sin;
2. To endeavor to advance in virtue;
3. To have a great desire to be united to Jesus Christ.

XXXIX. The Effects of Frequent Communion Are:

1. To inspire us with a great horror of all sins
2. To weaken the violence of our passions
3. To fill the soul with peace and consolation
4. To unite us more intimately with Jesus Christ.

XL. The Fourteen Works of Mercy:

Seven are Spiritual:

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| 1. To counsel those in need; | 5. To forgive injuries; |
| 2. To instruct the ignorant; | 6. To bear wrongs patiently; |
| 3. To admonish sinners; | 7. To pray for the living and the dead. |
| 4. To comfort the afflicted; | |

Seven are Corporal:

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| 1. To feed the hungry; | 5. To ransom prisoners; |
| 2. To give drink to the thirsty; | 6. To visit the sick; |
| 3. To clothe the naked; | 7. To bury the dead. |
| 4. To give shelter to the homeless; | |

XLII. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

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| 1. Wisdom | 5. Knowledge |
| 2. Understanding | 6. Piety |
| 3. Counsel | 7. Fear of the Lord |
| 4. Fortitude | |

XLIII. The Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit:

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| 1. Charity | 7. Longanimity |
| 2. Joy | 8. Mildness |
| 3. Peace | 9. Faith |
| 4. Patience | 10. Modesty |
| 5. Benignity | 11. Continenence |
| 6. Goodness | 12. Chastity |

XLIV. The Eight Beatitudes (Mt. 5: 3-10):

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit,* for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. *Blessed are the meek,* for they shall inherit the land.

3. *Blessed are they who mourn*, for they shall be comforted.
4. *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice*, for they shall be filled.
5. *Blessed are the merciful*, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. *Blessed are the clean 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 suffer persecution for justice sake*, for theirs in the kingdom of heaven.

XLIV. The Spiritual Goods of the Church:

1. The merits of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saints;
2. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
3. The Sacraments;
4. The good words and prayers of the faithful.

XLV. The Communion of Saints Between the Church Triumphant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Militant, and Among the Faithful Upon the Earth Is the Reason:

1. That we honor and invoke the saints in heaven, and participate in their merits,
2. That the saints in heaven intercede for us;
3. That we can relieve the souls in purgatory by our prayers and good work;
4. That the faithful participate in all the prayers and good works of one another, and in those of the Church, as well as in her advantages.

XLVI. The Two Kinds of Indulgences:

1. *Plenary indulgence*, which is the remission of all the temporal punishment due to the sins already forgiven as to the guilt.
2. *Partial indulgence*, which is the remission of a part of the temporal punishment due to the sins already forgiven as to the guilt.

XLVII. To Gain an Indulgence, It Is Necessary:

1. To be in the state of grace;

2. To have the intention of gaining it;
3. To fulfill the prescribed conditions.

XLVIII. The Last Four Ends:

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| A. Death; | C. Heaven; |
| B. Judgment; | D. Hell. |

(“In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.” Eccus. 7. 40)

XLIX. The Spiritual Superiors Are:

1. The Pope;
2. The bishop in union with the Holy Father;
3. The parish priest in union with the bishop;
4. The priests, in proportion to the authority conferred upon them by the Church.

L. The Temporal Superiors Are:

1. The head of the country;
2. The magistrates;
3. Parents, tutors and husbands;
4. Masters and mistresses;
5. All elderly persons or those more elevated in dignity.

LI. We Owe to Spiritual and Temporal Superiors:

1. Love;
2. Respect;
3. Obedience according to God.

LII. Prayer, Which is an Elevation of the Soul to God, is Divided into:

1. Mental and vocal prayer;
2. Public and private prayer.

LIII. There Are Four Ends of Prayer:

1. Adoration;
2. Reparation;
3. Thanksgiving;
4. Petition.

Note: These are excellently contained in the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

LIV. In the Presence of a Majesty So Great and So Merciful as That of God, Our Prayers Ought to Be Said:

1. With attention;
2. With respect;
3. With humility;
4. With confidence;
5. With perseverance.

(“He that prays well, knows how to live well.” St. Augustine)

LV. The Mysteries of the Rosary Are:

The Joyful Mysteries

1. The *Annunciation* of the Angel to Mary that she was to conceive and bring forth Jesus Christ our Lord.
- B. The *Visitation* of Mary to St. Elizabeth.
- C. The *Nativity* of the child Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem.
- D. The *Presentation* of Jesus Christ in the Temple, and the Purification of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.
- E. The *Finding of Our Lord Jesus* in the Temple teaching among the doctors.

The Luminous Mysteries

1. The *Baptism of Jesus* in the Jordan.
2. The *Wedding Feast at Cana*.
3. The *Proclamation of the Kingdom* by Jesus in His teaching while on earth..
4. The *Transfiguration* of Jesus.

5. The *Institution of the Eucharist* at the Last Supper.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

1. The *Agony in the Garden* of Olives.
2. The *Scourging at the pillar*.
3. The *Crowning with Thorns*.
4. The *Carrying of the Cross*.
5. The *Crucifixion and Death* of Our Lord Jesus.

The Glorious Mysteries

1. The *Resurrection* of Jesus.
2. The *Ascension* of Jesus Christ into Heaven.
3. The *Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and Our Blessed Mother* on the day of Pentecost.
4. The *Assumption* of Mary into heaven.
5. The *Coronation of Mary as Queen of Heaven and earth*, and exalted above all the angels.

LVI. The Devotions of a Pious Christian Are:

1. Devotion to Our Lord, especially to:
 - The Blessed Sacrament;
 - The Sacred Heart;
 - The Passion;
 - His Holy Infancy;
 - The Precious Blood.
2. Devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, especially to:
 - Her Immaculate Heart;
 - Her Seven Dolors;
 - The Holy Rosary.
3. Devotion to St. Joseph
4. Devotion to the Holy Angels, especially to St. Michael and the guardian angels.
5. Devotion to one's holy patron.
6. Devotion to the Souls in Purgatory.

LVII. The Principal Practices of a Pious Christian Are:

1. Frequent Communion
2. Assistance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
3. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament
4. Reciting the rosary
5. Regular Confession
6. Fasting/acts of penance
7. Alms-giving
8. Spiritual Readings: Scripture; Lives of the Saints, etc.