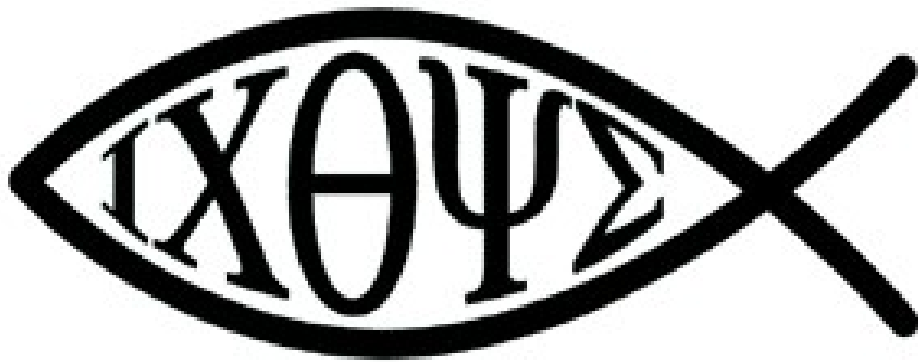


# WJEC Religious Studies A

## Revision Book Roman Catholicism 1



Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Roman Catholicism 1 - Beliefs, Teachings and Sources

## The Birth of Jesus



### KEYWORDS

**Incarnation** - God became man in Jesus

**Bible** - Christian holy book

**Forgiveness** - To have any sins that you have done, forgotten

**Reconciliation** - To repair a broken relationship

**Baptism** - Washing away of sins either as a baby or an adult

**Temptations** - Feeling the need to do something that is wrong

**Crucifixion** - Took place on Good Friday

**Resurrection** - Jesus coming back to life

**Inspiration** - Motivates people to do what is good

**Informed Conscience** - Making a decision whilst taking into consideration teaching from the Bible, Church, Priests etc

The Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that she would have a baby. She questioned this as she was a virgin. She was engaged to be married to Joseph. Angel Gabriel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to marry Mary, as he wanted to divorce her quietly.

The Romans issued a census that everyone had to return to their home town to be registered. Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem, when there the time came for Mary to have her baby. There was no room for them at the inn so Jesus was born and placed in a Manger, an animal's feeding trough.

Shepherds on the hillside watching their sheep were visited by a host of Angels and told about the birth of Jesus. They went to Bethlehem to see Jesus.

Some wise men saw a star in the sky and followed it until they found Mary, Joseph and Jesus in Bethlehem. Herod the King was jealous and wanted to kill Jesus so order for all the baby boys to be killed.

You will find the story about the shepherds in Luke's Gospel and the Wise Men in Matthew's Gospel.



## Baptism of Jesus

John the Baptist was baptising people in the River Jordan, when Jesus went to him and asked to be baptised. John said that he should be asking Jesus to baptise him not Jesus asking John!

When Jesus was baptised and came up out of the water, the spirit of God in the form of a dove came down from heaven, and a voice said '**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am pleased**' Jesus then went off into the desert to pray.

The baptism of Jesus is found in Matthew, Mark and Luke's Gospels.

## Temptations of Jesus

After spending 40 days and 40 nights in the desert, the Devil tempted Jesus 3 times.

He said if you are the Son of God turn these stones into bread. Jesus replied '**Man shall not live on bread alone**'

The Devil took Jesus to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world which could belong to Jesus if he worshipped the Devil. Jesus said '**Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only**'

The Devil took Jesus to Jerusalem and said to throw himself off the top of the Temple as the Angels would catch him. Jesus replied '**Do not put the Lord your God to the test**'.

# The Crucifixion of Jesus

After the last supper, Jesus went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he was arrested. He was taken before the Jewish Council where they tried to get him to admit that he was God. He was then taken to Pontius Pilate the Roman Governor who sent him back to the Jewish Council who mocked him and sent him back to Pilate. Pilate asked the Jewish people who they wanted to free, Jesus or Barabbas, a murderer. The crowd shouted Barabbas, so Pilate washed his hands of the situation and sentenced Jesus to death.

Jesus carried his cross until he fell, Simon of Cyrene then carried it for him. He was taken to a place named Golgotha and crucified next to two thieves. Jesus said '**Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing**'. His clothes were divided up and dice thrown for them. He wore a crown of thorns and had a sign above the cross which said 'this is the King of the Jews'.

The two thieves next to him started to argue, one said if you are the Son of God, then save yourself and us. The second one said that they deserved to be

crucified as they had broken the law but Jesus had done nothing wrong. The second thief turned to Jesus and asked Jesus to remember him. Jesus said '**today you will be with me in Paradise**'.

At 12 o'clock darkness came over the land and remained until 3pm. The curtain in the temple was torn in two. Jesus cried out in a loud voice '**Father in your hands I place my spirit**', and died.

Jesus was taken and buried in a tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea.

Roman Catholics believe that Jesus died to forgive them for their sins. Man's sin meant that the relationship between us and God had been broken, and Jesus, being perfect, and dying for our sin, means that if we say sorry for our sin and believe in God, then our sin will be forgiven and we can go to heaven when we die. This is what Roman Catholics are remembering when they go to Mass, and will always ask for forgiveness before they take the body and blood of Jesus.

## The Resurrection

Early on the Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James and Joanna went to the tomb to embalm the body with spices (rub spices into the body). When they go there, the stone was rolled away and the body was not inside. Two men in bright shining clothes told them Jesus was not there, he had come back to life. They went and told the Disciples who did not believe them. Peter ran to the tomb and saw the white cloth that had been wrapped around the body of Jesus on the floor and was amazed at what had happened.

Mary Magdalene was in the garden when she saw who she thought was the gardener. She asked him where the body had gone. He turned to her and said 'Mary', it was then she realised who he was and replied 'Master'

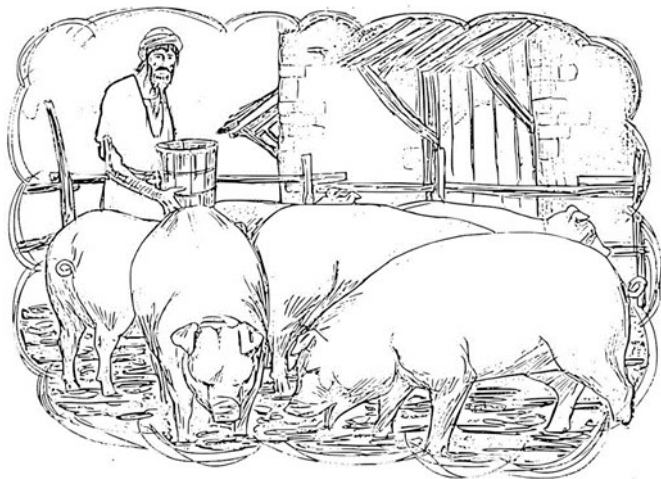
Thomas did not believe Jesus had come back to life until he has seen Jesus with his own eyes.

## Jesus Teachings on Love

Jesus taught the parable of the Good Samaritan. A Jewish man was beaten up and left for dead. A priest and a Levite (both Jewish) walked passed him. A Samaritan (an enemy of the Jews) helped him. Jesus was teaching us to '**Love your neighbour as yourself**', and that your neighbour is anyone who needs help, including those you do not like!

The consequences of not loving are found in the parable of the sheep and the goats. On Judgement Day people will be separated into two groups like a shepherd separates sheep from goats. Those on the right are told '**when I was hungry you fed me, when I was thirsty you gave me a drink**', they ask when Jesus did we every see you hungry or thirsty. Jesus replies '**I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these members of my family, you did it for me**'. In other words, if we help others we are doing it for God. In the parable those who helped go to Heaven and those who don't help go to Hell. This shows that Roman Catholics have a duty to love others.

# Roman Catholicism 1 Beliefs, Teachings and Sources



## Prodigal Son

A father had two sons, the youngest asked him for his inheritance and left home. He spent his money having a good time, until there was nothing left. He had to get a job but times were hard as there was a famine. He got a job feeding the pigs, when he came to his senses and realised his father's servants were better off than he was. He decided to go home and ask his father if he could be one of his servants. When his father saw him coming he ran to meet him, the father gave him a robe, put a ring on his finger and ordered for the fatted calf to be killed for a party. The father forgave the son unconditionally and welcomed him back into the family.

## Forgiveness

Jesus teaches that as Christians we have to forgive. The Our Father says '**Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us**'. This means that if Christians do not forgive others, then their sin will not be forgiven.

When Jesus was at the Temple, a woman was brought to him who had been caught committing adultery. The teachers of the law said to Jesus that the law said the crime was punishable by death, what did he think. Jesus wrote in the dirt on the floor and said '**Let he who is without sin cast the first stone**'. One by one they all left. Jesus turned to the woman and said '**Go and sin no more**'.

When asked by Peter, how many times he had to forgive, Jesus said '**seventy times seven**'. In other words, keep forgiving as God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others.

## Reconciliation

This is a sacrament in the Roman Catholic Church. It is also known as Confession, a time when a person sits with a priest and tells the priest of the sins he has committed. The priest, then with God's authority tells them their sin has been forgiven.

This is an ongoing sacrament that Catholics will take many times during their life time. They will have to do Penance for their sin eg praying the rosary to show they are truly sorry.

Catholics believe that you cannot take the body and blood of Jesus during Mass if you have not confessed your sin.

## Link

Parable	Sacrament
The son sinned	We sin
Father watches for his Return	God wants us to return to him
The Son felt sorry	We feel sorry
The son said sorry	We say sorry
The father forgave unconditionally	God forgives us unconditionally

# Roman Catholicism 1 - Practices and ways of life

## Baptism

Catholics are usually baptised as babies and their parents make promises on their behalf during the ceremony.

When a person receives the sacrament of baptism they become part of the Christian Church.

As part of baptism parents and godparents say vows which show that they believe in the Catholic faith and are willing to bring the children up according to the Church's teachings.

During baptism all sins are washed away and the person is left pure. This means that the original sin with which the child is born is washed away, leaving the person free from sin.

Baptism is seen as necessary for a person to receive salvation. Salvation means being saved from sin and is required so that the person can enter heaven.

## Marriage

The Catholic Church teaches that God created man and women for each other in the sacrament of marriage. The purposes of a Catholic marriage are:

So that the couple can have a life long relationship of love and faithfulness.

For the procreation of children

For the bringing up of a Christian family.

There are four steps to the rite of marriage. They are:

Questions: The priest asks the asked three solemn questions -about their free choice, about loving each other for life and accepting children lovingly from God.

Vows: The couple make their vows. In this way they are ministers of the sacrament to each other.

Exchanging rings and nuptial blessing: Rings are blessed and exchanged as a sign of love and fidelity. The priest offers the couple the nuptial blessing.



## Funeral Services

The Church says farewell to someone who has died in three stages:

In the home: often an all-night vigil or 'wake' is held in the home as relatives and friends take turns to 'watch over' the body.

In church: The coffin is taken into the church and placed in front of the altar. The priest greets the mourners and sprinkles the coffin with holy water as a reminder that the dead person was united into the death and resurrection of Jesus when they were baptised.

At the graveside: Prayers are said on the final hope which every Christian has whilst at the same time recognising the heartache of relatives and friends.

## Confirmation

The sacrament of confirmation is the final sacrament of initiation and means that the person has fully joined with the Catholic Church.

The sacrament gives grace which is needed in order to live a Christian life and so eventually receive salvation.

Only those who are full members of the Catholic Church can take on lay ministries.

As with baptism, confirmation leaves a spirited mark on the person that cannot be removed. Confirmation is therefore important as it spiritually identifies a believer in Christ.

Part of confirmation is the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is important as it inspires the recipient to have faith and be a witness to their faith.

It is a public declaration of faith as the baptismal vows are renewed. In baptism this declaration was made by the person's parents and godparents, while in confirmation it is the individual's own choice.

## Advent

The season of Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve.

The word 'Advent' comes from the Latin 'adventus', meaning 'the coming'. For Christians, there are three ways of thinking about the coming of Jesus.

Past: It means looking back to the past and thinking about the coming of Jesus 2000 years ago in a stable in Bethlehem.

Present: It means Jesus coming into people's lives now, and being present in the Christian community at Christmas.

Future: it means looking forward to the future, and Jesus coming again at the end of time.

During Advent, Catholics get ready for the festival of Christmas by examining their lives in a thoughtful way. This involves:

Reflecting on their life as a Christian to see what improvements can be made in order to become a better person.

Praying, asking God to help them change for the better.

Celebrating the sacrament of Reconciliation.

## Christmas

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on 25 December each year.

Christmas is the celebration of the incarnation when Christians believe God became a human being in Jesus Christ. The festival celebrating his birth is a joyful occasion and a time of thanksgiving. Christians thank God for sending His only Son to the world to be born as a human being.

Christmas is important to Catholics because:

Without the birth of Jesus Christ, there would be no Christianity.

Through celebrating the birth of Christ, Catholics recognise that he was born not only to teach and work miracles, but also to suffer and die to save humans from sin.

It allows Catholics to feel united and celebrate as a worldwide community. The celebration of Christmas Mass reminds Catholics that they all share a common faith.

At Christmas, Catholics remember the humility and strength of Mary and Joseph, and in their worship remember to try to be spiritually like them.

## Lent

Lent is a time that Christians spend in preparation for the celebration of Easter. Lent lasts forty days (without Sundays). It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Thursday. It is a time of the year when all Catholics remember the time that Jesus spent in the desert preparing for his active ministry.

On Ash Wednesday, Catholics go to church for a special Penitential Mass. As a sign of their penitence they have a cross of ashes smeared on their forehead by the priest. The cross of ashes reminds them of the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Lent is a time when Catholics concentrate on improving their Christian lives. They will try to give something up to make them into better people and show devotion to God. They will often give the money they save to charity. Catholics try to pray more and strengthen their faith by acts of mercy such as visiting the sick and housebound.

It is a time when Catholics receive the sacrament of reconciliation in hope that by becoming better Christians they will receive salvation.

## Easter

Easter is the most important celebration in the Christian calendar. It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ which Christians believe proves that Jesus is in fact God, since no one but God could rise from the dead.

The resurrection proves that there is eternal life. Since Jesus rose from the dead, his faithful followers are assured that they too will have life after death with God in his kingdom.

Easter celebrates the fact heaven is possible for those who follow Jesus.

The resurrection also gives Catholics the assurance that Jesus is not dead, he is alive to help and guide his Church and to be with individual Christians.

The renewal of baptismal vows at Easter is important because it makes Catholics re-commit themselves to the Christian life.

The resurrection proves that Jesus is still alive and working in his Church. This means that Catholics can call upon God in prayer and know that Jesus and the Holy Spirit will be with them.

# UNIT 3: Expressing Meaning



## Worship and Mass

The catechism calls the Eucharist the '**Summit of Christian life**'. The mass is a renewal of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. At the last Supper the first mass was held. Here Jesus took bread and wine and changed them into his Body and Blood which he got his disciples to take. There are links between this and the Passover in Moses time, where the blood of the lamb saved the Israelite's first born. Here the Blood of Jesus saves all mankind from its sins.

Mass is a liturgy (a special ceremony) made up of different parts. The welcome is followed by the penitential rite (saying sorry) then the Liturgy of the Word (hearing Gods word from the Bible). Then there is the presentation of Gifts (the offertory where the bread and wine are brought up. After this is the Eucharistic prayers, this is the most important part of the mass where the priest asks the Holy Spirit to come down on the gifts and transform them into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Then people receive Communion and finally there is the rite of dismissal.

Catholics believe that Jesus is really present when they have Holy Communion he comes under the form of bread and wine but they are no longer bread and wine. This process is called transubstantiation. The word Eucharist means thanksgiving. Communion is often called this because for Catholics we are grateful and thankful that Jesus comes to us.

## Inside the Church

**Stoup**- small dish with holy water in

**Font**- large bowl filled with water for baptism

**Altar**- table where the bread and wine are taken for the Eucharist

**Candles**- indicate the light of Christ

**Statues and Crucifix**- reminders to Catholics about whom they are praying to

**Stations of the Cross**- pictorial representation of the last hours of Jesus life

**Steeple**- tower pointing upwards towards heaven often has the church bells in

**Confessional**- room where confessions take place

**Tabernacle**- locked metal box behind the altar contains the body of Jesus.

**Cathedral**- Mother church of a Diocese must also have a Bishop there.



"Adoration is homage of the spirit to the 'King of Glory,' respectful silence in the presence of the 'ever greater' God. Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications."

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, N. 2628

## Pilgrimage

Catholics have been going on pilgrimage for centuries. As Christian life is seen as a Journey places associated with Jesus such as Jerusalem or the early church (Rome) have been visited by Christians for different reasons. Some people go to thank God for a particular reason, others to say sorry. Others may be seeking a cure for an illness or to deepen their faith. On pilgrimage they may find the journey difficult and uncomfortable but they may also meet new people from different countries and share the experience.

Popular places of pilgrimage are often associated with apparitions of Mary such as Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje.

## Other Ways of Worship

Apart from mass Catholics worship in a variety of ways. The Charismatic renewal emphasises prayers of praise and praying for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Eucharistic adoration where the host is exposed on the altar is a quieter form of worshipping Jesus. Catholics are encouraged to pray at home and in community praying the rosary, and using the bible (Lectio Divinia). All of these ways of worship are to give glory to God to get to know Him better and to build a relationship with Him so we follow His will.

## Rome

Pilgrims have been going to Rome since the earliest days of Christianity. The Apostles Peter and Paul were both martyred there and buried there. Many Christians were also martyred in Rome and their bodies buried in catacombs underneath the city.

Pilgrims go today to honour those martyrs and visit the places associated with them. In addition of course the Pope lives in the Vatican which is a separate district of Rome and its own country.

It is considered a great honour and blessing to see the Pope and receive his blessing. There are four basilicas in Rome which pilgrims should try to visit; they are St Peters, St John Lateran, St Mary Major and St Paul outside the walls. Rome also has the headquarters of the catholic religious orders, the Sistine chapel and many other churches of historical interest and relics from past years.

## Lourdes

In 1858 in a small village in Southern France a teenage girl Bernadette Soubirous claimed to have had a series of apparitions of the Virgin Mary. The instructions from Mary to Bernadette were to tell the church to build a church on the site and for people to come in pilgrimage repenting for their sins. Bernadette was also shown a spring where people could drink and wash in its waters.

Today Lourdes is a place of pilgrimage especially for the sick and handicapped but also for people seeking spiritual renewal and comfort. The days at Lourdes follow a pattern with Mass, processions and time for pilgrims to drink and bathe in the waters and visit the places associated with the visions.

Many pilgrims go to Lourdes as helpers of the sick, they see this as part of their spiritual life. Lourdes is well set up with modern hospital facilities.



## General key words

**Faith-** belief in God

**Worship-** demonstrating your belief in God by prayer and adoration

**Pilgrimage-** a religious journey to a special place of religious interest such as Rome or Lourdes

**Eucharist-** Greek for thanksgiving, another name for Holy Communion

**Blessed Sacrament** - another name for bread that has become Jesus' body.

**Mass-** from the Latin Missa which means 'to dismiss'

**Transubstantiation** - changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus.

## Lifestyle

Roman Catholics are motivated to do the will of God '**Seek first the Kingdom of God.**' Matt 6:33 which means loving God and your Neighbour (the golden commandments). The ways in which Catholics worship are varied but the most important by far is the Mass. Here is this sacrament Jesus becomes really present Body, Blood Soul and Divinity. The risen Jesus comes to Catholics just like he does to those in heaven. This is why Mass above all other prayers and sacraments is most important Jesus becomes really present.

It is important for Catholics to pray and worship God this will help their relationship with Jesus. Feasts and festivals during the church year help provide a rhythm to Christian living and keep us focused on God. We go through the life of Jesus and the early church at Christmas, lent, Easter and Pentecost. The church teaches you cannot develop your relationship without prayer and worship.

For motivation on this see chapter on beliefs teachings and source.



# The Bible as a Source of Authority

The Bible is split into two main sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains everything that happened to the Jewish people before the birth of Jesus. Many of the laws that the Pharisees and Jewish people followed at the time of Jesus were taken from the Old Testament.

The New Testament begins with the birth of Jesus. The first four books are called Gospels, which are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These contain biographies of the life of Jesus. The rest of the New Testament contains what happened at the beginnings of the Christian Church and teachings which the early Christians were encouraged to follow.

For Christians the Bible is the word of God. God inspired everyday people to write down what he was telling them. St Paul states '**All scripture is God breathed**'.

The Bible is a source of authority for Roman Catholics, but has to be used along with the Churches teaching such as the Catechism and the Magisterium.

The Magisterium is the authority that the Pope, Priests and Bishops have to teach the followers of Catholicism.

Protestant Christians refer to the Bible as their main source of authority, whereas a Catholic would refer to the teachings of the Church and the Magisterium as well as the Bible.

When making an important decision, Roman Catholics would use their conscience. If they rely on themselves alone it would be a personal conscience. However, Catholics look to the teachings of the Church and the Bible to inform their conscience (informed conscience). If they have a difficult decision to make, they may speak to their Priest, read the Bible, refer to the Catechism, pray as well as talking to others before making a decision. Parts of the Bible that could help them make a decision, could include the Ten Commandments, parables and teachings of Jesus and the teachings of St Paul. Not all topics are covered in the Bible eg Abortion or Euthanasia, so the Bible teachings need to be interpreted to give teachings Christians can follow today.

## Practice Questions

Describe the birth of Jesus - 4 marks

Describe the resurrection - 4 marks

Describe the temptations - 4 marks

Describe the Crucifixion - 4 marks

Describe the baptism of Jesus - 4 marks

Explain Catholic teaching on love - 4 marks

Explain Catholic teaching on reconciliation - 4 marks

Explain how Catholics use the Bible in decision making - 4 marks

Explain why the Bible is a source of Authority - 4 marks

'It is important to love everyone' discuss

'Christians must always forgive' discuss

'Catholics must obey the teachings of the Church' discuss

## Your Own Notes

# Identity, Diversity and Belonging

## KEYWORDS

**Secularism**- trying to build a state/country without reference to God.

**Relativism**- the belief that all ideas and beliefs are equal or of equal value.

**Ecumenism**- the idea of churches all working together whether they are Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox.

**Nostra Aetate**- the Vatican II document that outlines the church's relations with other faiths

**Dominus Jesus**- Vatican document released in the year 2000 for the Jubilee, states catholic Christianity is the truest form of belief in the world.

## Being a Catholic Cont.

During times of trouble like illness or death the church can provide comfort and support to people.

Catholics have to battle with a state that is increasingly secular and often at odds with the values of the church. An example of this would be abortion, the state allows it. The Church sees it as murder.

Relativism also attacks the church as it is seen as just one of many belief systems and therefore its value is diminished because of that. Increasingly the value of religion and faith is challenged in public life. This was something Pope Benedict tried to address when he came to Britain in 2010.

## Relationships with other faiths

- Relations between Christianity and other religions have been tense at times.
- Christianity is a missionary religion it seeks to convert others (Mark 16:15) **He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."**
- This has led to issues, crusades, slavery and conflict over time especially with Muslims.
- The treatment of Jews in the middle ages due to the charge of Deicide.( Killing of God /Jesus)
- Christians have three basic outlooks on other faiths. 1. They are false and only Christianity is true. 2. That Christianity is the only true religion but other religions have some truth.

## Catholics and other faiths today

- Vatican II changed the outlook of the church towards other religions
- The church was to look for common ground with other religions
- Pope John Paul II held a famous inter religious prayer meeting in Assisi in 1986.
- Catholic leaders today are more likely to seek dialogue with local faiths in local areas regarding social issues such as poverty, housing etc..
- In The year 2000 the church released another document ' **Dominus Jesus**' this upset protestants and other religions. The document stressed that Christianity was the only true religion of God and that Roman Catholicism was the one true form of this.

## Being a Catholic

A Roman Catholic is a Christian of the oldest and biggest tradition, who believes Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Being a catholic today presents challenges and opportunities. For many years in Britain Catholics had a siege mentality left over from the reformation when they were persecuted for their beliefs. Today the biggest threat to Catholics is secularism. The benefits of belonging to this faith group include identity, spiritual growth and community. Parishes provide Mass and other spiritual exercises as well as social and educational provision. Examples of this include communion classes, bingo clubs, St Vincent De Paul society and prayer groups.

**Nostra Aetate a document from Vatican II- this document changed the relationship between the Catholic Church and other religions it said:**

- All religions and peoples look to return to God
- Recognises there are some truths in Hinduism and Buddhism
- Holds Islam in esteem as they honour Mary and Abraham and the prophets

Holds that the Jews cannot be held responsible for the death of Jesus and the church must work against Anti -Semitism.

# Roman Catholicism 1 Meaning, Purpose and Truth



## Abortion - The Law

The Abortion Act was passed in the UK in 1967 and updated in 1990, as a way of stopping illegal backstreet abortions. The law states that for an abortion to be legal:-

- Two doctors have to agree to the abortion, although medical professionals do have the right to not to agree
- There has to be a serious risk to the mental or physical health of the mother
- The baby is found not to be developing properly and will be disabled or have learning difficulties
- There is a risk to the mental or physical health of existing children
- Abortions have to take place before 24 weeks
- An abortion can only take place after 24 weeks in the case of a disability to the unborn child.

## KEYWORDS

**Sanctity of Life** - Life is sacred and holy, something that is very precious and made by God

**Abortion** - The deliberate termination of a pregnancy

**Euthanasia** - The deliberate ending of a person's life because they are terminally ill

**Trinity** - The belief that God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

**Nature of God** - The character of God, what is God like?

**Heaven** - After life where God is

**Hell** - After life where God is not

**Purgatory** - A place where Catholics believe they go after death, to have their sins forgiven, before they can enter heaven.

## Church Views

**Roman Catholics** believe that abortion is always wrong and never allowable. **'The merciless slaughter of unborn babies is never justified'** (Catechism). There are no exceptions and the Church would see adoption as an alternative for an unborn child.

**Church of England** believe that abortion is never right, but in some cases it is the best option, particularly in the case of disability or if the mother's life is at risk.

**Methodist Church** holds the same view as the Church of England but takes into account existing children, financial situations and housing.

## Bible Quotes

'Do not Kill' - 10 Commandments

'God made man in his own image' Genesis

'You knit me together in my mother's womb' - Old Testament

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you' - Old Testament

'Your body is a temple of the holy spirit' St Paul

# Euthanasia

There are four types of Euthanasia:-

**Voluntary Euthanasia** - Where someone wants to die and asks for someone to end their life

**Involuntary Euthanasia** - Where someone is unable to make a decision themselves about ending their life and therefore someone makes the decision for them

**Passive Euthanasia** - Where treatment is removed or not given, resulting in the ending of life eg a life machine being turned off, the removal of feeding tubes

**Active Euthanasia** - When you actively do something to end a life eg lethal drugs

In the UK Euthanasia is illegal and you can be prosecuted if you help someone to die. The only type of Euthanasia allowed is passive euthanasia, as the person is seen to be 'brain dead' before the life support is turned off.

All churches are united in their views on Euthanasia. No church will allow the use of Euthanasia as they believe that all life is given by God and life can only be taken away by God. All churches would agree that the turning off of the life support machine would be acceptable as the person would be brain dead and therefore life has already gone.

Christians would say there is no need for Euthanasia as the Hospice Movement can help those who are terminally ill. People who go to the hospice are treated with respect and dignity and given a comfortable place to spend their last days and hours.

Suicide is also not accepted by the church. In days gone by, people who committed suicide were buried at cross roads, in an attempt to confuse the soul. People who committed suicide could not be buried on holy ground in a church yard.

Today the church recognises that people who want to commit suicide are in need of help, support and counselling and the church will do what it can to

## The Trinity

This is the Christian belief that there is one God (Monotheist). The one God has three different parts.

**God the Father** - The Creator of the World, He is **Omnipotent** (all powerful), **Omniscient** (all knowing) and **Benevolent** (all loving).

**God the Son** - Jesus the man who is God on earth (**Incarnation**). He died for our sins so that if we believe in Him and ask for forgiveness, we can go to Heaven when we die.

**God the Holy Spirit** - Sent at Pentecost to be with the disciples of Jesus until the second coming of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is a Comforter and allows Christians to have the gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self control.

## Life After Death

Catholics believe that when you die, your soul is separated from your body. Your soul will either go straight to heaven (if you have died without sin), Purgatory (a place where sin can be forgiven before you go to Heaven), or straight to Hell. You cannot go from Purgatory to Hell. Heaven is a place where God is and Hell is a place where God is not.

Catholics believe that when Jesus comes again (the Second Coming) there will be a Judgement Day, where everyone who has ever lived will be judged according to their actions here on earth. The parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31) and the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19) indicate that there are consequences to our actions.

# Roman Catholicism 1 - Values and Commitments



## Divorce

The Catholic Church does not allow religious divorce or re-marriage. Catholic marriage is a sacrament and the exchange of vows means that the only way a marriage between baptised Catholics can be dissolved (religiously) is by death of one of the partners or if the marriage is annulled.

Catholics have this attitude because:

- Jesus taught that divorce is wrong in Mark's Gospel and Christians should follow the teachings of Jesus.
- The couple have made a covenant with God in the sacrament of marriage and that covenant cannot be broken by an earthly power.
- The Church teaches very clearly in the Catechism that marriage cannot be dissolved and so religious divorce is impossible.

However, The Catholic Church does allow annulment if it can be proved that the marriage was never consummated or it was not a true Christian marriage.

## Homosexuality - Catholic attitude

The Catholic attitude to homosexuality is that being a homosexual is not a sin but that homosexual sexual relationships are a sin. The Catholic Church asks homosexuals to live without any sexual activity (ie. Be celibate).

They have this attitude because:

- The Bible condemns homosexual activity.  
*"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable."* (Leviticus 18:22)
- It is the teaching of the Church that sexual activity should be creative as well as unitive, and it is not possible for homosexuals to have procreative sex.

The Catholic Church condemns all forms of homophobia. It believes it is sinful to harass homosexuals or attack their behaviour because the Bible teaches that everyone has human dignity because they are made in the image of God.

## Marriage

The Catholic Church teaches that God created man and women for each other in the sacrament of marriage. The purposes of a Catholic marriage are:

So that the couple can have a life long relationship of love and faithfulness.

For the procreation of children

For the bringing up of a Christian family.

There are four steps to the rite of marriage. They are:

Questions: The priest asks the asked three solemn questions -about their free choice, about loving each other for life and accepting children lovingly from God.

Vows: The couple make their vows. In this way they are ministers of the sacrament to each other.

Exchanging rings and nuptial blessing: Rings are blessed and exchanged as a sign of love and fidelity. The priest offers the couple the nuptial blessing.

## Homosexuality - The Liberal protestant attitude

Many Liberal Protestants have the attitude that lifelong homosexual relationships are acceptable and homosexuals are welcomed into the Church, but homosexual relationships cannot be equal to Christian marriage. The reasons for this attitude are:

- They believe that the teachings of the Bible need reinterpreting in the light of modern knowledge and that the anti-homosexual texts in the Bible are a reflection of the Jewish culture at the time rather than the word of God.
- They feel that the major Christian belief in love and acceptance means that homosexuals must be accepted.
- Many believe that inspiration comes from the Holy Spirit as well as the Bible and if Christians feel the Spirit approves of their homosexuality, it cannot be denied.

## Birth control

Contraception is something that allows sex to happen without conception occurring so allowing a couple to control the number of children they have.

The Catholic Church has always taught responsible parenthood. The Church teaches that sexual intercourse is a gift from God as a source of joy and pleasure to married couples (the unitive purpose) as well as a means of creating a family (the creative purpose). The Church teaches that using artificial methods of contraception (eg. condoms, the pill, and the coil) is going against God's intentions. Catholics believe this because:

- Pope Paul VI condemned all forms of artificial contraception in his encyclical *Humane Vitae*. He affirmed the teaching of previous Popes that the only allowable forms of contraception are natural methods. This teaching has been confirmed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- Artificial methods of birth control separate the unitive and creative aspects of sex, which is not what God intended.
- The Catholic Church regards contraception as a major cause of sexual promiscuity, broken families, the rise in the divorce rate and sexually transmitted diseases.

### The attitude of non - Catholic Christians

Almost all non-Catholic Christians believe that all forms of contraception are permissible as long as they are used to restrict the size of family and not simply to stop having children altogether. They have this attitude because:

- Christianity is about love and justice, and contraception improves women's health and raises the standard of living of children as families are smaller.
- God created sex for enjoyment and to cement the bonds of marriage. Within marriage, contraception allows the role of sex to be separated from making children and this is not God's will.
- There is nothing in the Bible that forbids the use of contraception.
- They believe that it is better to combat HIV/AIDS by using condoms than by expecting everyone to follow Christian rules about sex and marriage.

## Pre - marital sex and adultery

Christianity teaches that sex should only take place between a man and a woman married to each other. Therefore most Christians believe that sex outside marriage is wrong because:

- Christianity teaches that sex was given to humans by God for the joy, pleasure and bond of a married couple and for the procreation of children, and children should be brought up in a Christian family so sex should only take place within a marriage.
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that pre-marital sex is wrong and Catholics are encouraged to follow the teachings of the Church.
- All Christians are against adultery. Adultery is a sexual act between a married person and someone other than their marriage partner. They are against adultery because it breaks the wedding vows to be faithful to each other.
- They are also against adultery because it is condemned in the Ten Commandments, which all Christians should follow.
- Adultery is condemned by Jesus in the Gospels and all Christians should follow the teachings of Jesus.

Some Christians accept that couples may live together before marriage, but they would expect them to marry when starting a family and would only accept a sexual relationship between two people committed to a long-term relationship.