

# Applied Catholic Theology

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# LIFE AND DEATH

Source of Wisdom

Christians believe that at death life is 'CHANGED' not ended'



Eternal Life

"I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: we will not sleep, but we will be changed."  
- 1 Corinthians 15: 50-51

## CATHOLICS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DYING WELL

For Catholics, it is important to help those who are facing death to...

### PREPARE

themselves to die well  
This may include:

- Spending **time with family**
- Updating their **will** to reduce worry about money and inheritance
- Discussing what they'd like their **funeral** to be like
- Making peace** with family members and friends
- For those in significant pain 'preparing for death' will include **palliative care** to reduce pain

### RESPECT the VALUE of their lives

The Catholic Church **rejects** **euthanasia and assisted suicide** as ways of ending a life.

Live is God given and therefore **only God can take it** (death must be natural).

The Catholic Church promote **hospices** (a place where people with terminal illness can go for control of the symptoms and pain) and other organisations that provide palliative care when treated to cure a medical condition is no longer possible.

### Provide RITUALS to SUPPORT the GRIEVING

- This means that the **funeral rite** includes **imagery and symbols** that reflect belief and hope in **eternal life**.
- Prayers are said for those who have died. Belief in eternal life is explored through **music and art**.



## Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide

These are both ways of ending someone's life **BEFORE** its 'natural end'.

### Euthanasia

This term means a 'good' or 'gentle' death.

Euthanasia is the term used to refer to a procedure where a **MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL** gives medication to end the life of a person who is suffering **UNBEARABLE PAIN** from a prolonged **INCURABLE** condition. **Voluntary Euthanasia** is done on the request of the individual whose life will be ended. Such voluntary euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands.



Both euthanasia and assisted suicide are currently **ILLEGAL** in the UK. The Catholic Church teaches that these **DELIBERATE ACTIONS** to end a life before natural death are **WRONG** in **ALL CIRCUMSTANCES**.

### Assisted Suicide

Seeking help to end one's own life.

Assisted suicide is the term used when an individual **SEEKS HELP to END THEIR OWN LIFE** in a **PAIN FREE/reduced** process. Some countries have changed their laws to permit (allow) assisted suicide.

KEY DOCUMENT FOR THIS TOPIC:

## EVANGELIUM VITAE (Good News of Life).

Written by **St Pope John Paul II**.

St Pope John Paul II  
*Evangelium Vitae*  
(Good News of Life) - 1995



"...I confirm that **euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person.**"



- This teaching comes from the belief that all human life is sacred or holy. Belief in the sanctity of life comes from an understanding that life itself is a **gift from God** and is therefore precious and should be **respected from conception to natural death**.
- Deliberate killing, such as euthanasia and assisted suicide, are seen as going against the instruction in the **Ten Commandments: 'Do not murder'**. There are suitable alternatives to euthanasia available through palliative care.
- Also, the Catholic tradition teaches that **suffering does have a purpose** in helping us to learn about ourselves and others and to understand the human condition.
- The Church also acknowledges that some people are able to **identify with the suffering of Jesus** at the crucifixion.
- It is reasonable to seek palliative care to reduce pain and maintain dignity. *Evangelium Vitae* points out that **such heroic behaviour [Jesus' death on the cross] cannot be considered the duty for everyone.**



## PALLIATIVE CARE Controlling Pain



### WHO NEEDS IT?

For some people the time leading up to death can be long. For those who have a significant illness (such as cancer) or degenerative condition (such as Motor Neurone Disease) there may be long periods of pain.

**Palliative care aims to control pain.**

### MEDICATION TO RELIEVE THE PAIN

Medication is provided to reduce pain and to enable the individual to retain as much dignity and quality of life as possible. Hospices and other organisations that offer similar care, have doctors to provide pain relieving medication, nursing care, supervision and practical help until natural death occurs.

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON PALLIATIVE CARE

The Catholic Church supports those who provide care because it respects the value of every person until their natural death. The source of wisdom you would use here is Pope St John Paul II's document: *Evangelium Vitae* (Good News of Life).



St Pope John Paul II  
*Evangelium Vitae*  
(Good News of Life) - 1995

St Pope John Paul II clearly stated in this document that palliative care is an appropriate way of relieving pain for two reasons:

- It allows people to **reject any treatment that is too painful or difficult**.
- It allows people to **maintain their dignity and some quality of life**.

Some pain relieving drugs are very strong and in some cases can make death happen sooner. Some people object to the use of these drugs.



**Motor neurone disease**, also known as ALS, occurs when specialist nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord called **motor neurones** stop working properly.



**Death:** *The end of physical life, when the physical body ceases completely to function.*



**Eternal Life:** The term used to refer to life in heaven after death. Also, the phrase Jesus uses to describe a state of living as God intends, which leads to a life in heaven.

Jesus' death and resurrection allows us to spend eternity with God

Catholic teaching on death can only be understood in a context in a belief in **Eternal life**. Eternal life is the belief that when **Jesus died on the cross**, he **paid for our sins** and when he **rose from the dead**, he **defeated death**. Catholics therefore believe that because of these things, Christians can hope to go to heaven after death and spend eternity with God.



## Knowledge Check



- Define the key concept **death**
- Which quote supports the Christian belief that after death life is 'changed not ended'?
- What three things do Catholics believe are important to help those who are facing death?
- What is euthanasia?
- What is assisted suicide?
- What does the Catholic Church teach about euthanasia and assisted suicide?
- What does St Pope John Paul II say about euthanasia in *Evangelium Vitae*?
- What two reasons does St Pope John Paul II give to support palliative care as an appropriate method of relieving pain?

## Choose a Task



- Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
- Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
- Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question



b) Describe Catholic teachings on Palliative Care [5]

# 1 Sanctity of life

## IS THERE A RIGHT WAY TO DIE?

# 1 Quality of life

Beliefs about end-of-life issues like euthanasia and assisted suicide are often based on two things:

2 Many religious believers think that all human life is **SACRED** because it was given to us by God. All human life has **VALUE**. They believe that only God has the right to end a life and, therefore, there should be **NO RIGHT TO DIE**.

### 5 A "right to die" argument

- The **BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION (BHA)** has a very different approach towards the quality and sanctity of life. Their view is that the decision about quality of life and whether or not life is bearable rests with the **INDIVIDUAL**.
- They reject the idea of God, so don't believe that life is sacred.
- Rather, they believe that all humans have **AUTONOMY** (the right to choose for themselves) and any decision about prolonging or ending a life should be down to the individual.
- They conclude that legalizing assisted dying would mean that individuals would be free to make their own decisions about their end of life care.
- They don't reject palliative care but argue that euthanasia and assisted suicide should be legal alternatives for those who want them.

In 2012, the BHA supported a challenge to UK law on behalf of Tony Nicklinson who had 'locked in syndrome'. This condition meant that he was unable to move or speak. He repeatedly asked for the right to be able to choose an assisted death. He felt that the law condemned him to live with increasing indignity and misery.

### 2012 Tony Nicklinson



A few years later, Diane Pretty had asked the courts to permit her husband to be able to take her to a Dignitas clinic in Switzerland where euthanasia is permitted, should she make the decision that her quality of life had deteriorated too far. Both of these people died without changes in UK law.

### Diane Pretty

"Love your neighbour as yourself" – Sermon on the Mount  
"Do to others as you would have them do to you" – Golden Rule  
"Do not kill" – 10 Commandments

## 6 Catholic Beliefs

- Catholic teachings on the quality and sanctity of life are based on the belief that all life is given by God, and is sacred, so no one has the right to end a life.
- Therefore they do not accept that people have a right to die and think that euthanasia and assisted suicide are not acceptable.
- They care about quality of life and campaign for palliative care to make life for suffering people as comfortable and pain-free as possible.
- This view is shared by many other Christians and people of other religions. Islam and Judaism also believe in the sanctity of life.
- Euthanasia and assisted suicide should not be considered because the focus should be on showing compassion to the dying person to allow them to retain their dignity (being worthy of honour or respect).

## 7 Other Christian Beliefs

- Some religious people reach different conclusions on this issue.
- For example, some Christians focus on the compassion that Jesus showed in his healing miracles and in his teaching. They look in particular to Jesus' teaching to **"Love your neighbour as yourself"** and the **Golden Rule** (**"Do to others as you would have them do to you."**)
- They would argue that allowing euthanasia, if an individual feels that the quality of the life has become too low, would be a sign of love that clearly demonstrates loving compassion.
- Such an argument is used to support **VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA** (the patient asks for it) and to support a change to UK law to allow assisted suicide.
- There is a continuing increase in the number of people in the UK who support both voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide.

3 This refers to people's **WELLBEING** and the extent to which a person's life is **MEANINGFUL** and **PLEASURABLE**.

It is a difficult concept to measure and doctors often look at pain levels, the extent of disability and the ability of patients to perform basic tasks for themselves. If someone is living with a severe disability or a terminal illness, it could be argued that their **QUALITY OF LIFE IS SO LOW** that they should have the **RIGHT TO DIE**.

### What Does The Law Say?

- Euthanasia is legally permitted in the Netherlands and a few other countries.
- Assisted suicide is legally permitted in Switzerland and some states in the USA. Since 2010, the Director of Public Prosecutions for England and Wales has said it is unlikely that someone would be prosecuted for helping someone travel to Switzerland for assisted suicide if:
  - A) it was clear the person had reached a voluntary, settled and informed decision, and
  - B) the one helping was wholly motivated by compassion

## 6 The Catholic Church Put Forward the Following Arguments...

### 8 Slippery slope argument

The worry is that, whilst the motivation behind the campaigns to change UK law are reasonable, is it really possible to accept euthanasia or assisted suicide? Where do we draw the line?

### Quality of Life

There are numerous examples of people who have lived fruitful and valuable lives despite the difficult circumstances they find themselves in.

### Who decides 'quality of life'?

The most common examples in **FAVOUR** of euthanasia and assisted suicide are those of people with incurable conditions and people in unbearable pain. Twenty-three-year-old Daniel James was paralysed from the chest down following a rugby injury. He sought assisted suicide because he could not come to terms with what he felt to be a diminished quality of life. On the other hand, many people live productive and valuable lives despite such paralysis.

## 4 Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)

Do not resuscitate orders are **LEGAL ORDERS** **not to try** and resuscitate a patient if they were to stop breathing or their heart was to stop beating. They are often requested by patients for whom resuscitation is unlikely to work or where it could lead to unnecessary suffering or poor quality of life. This is **not the same as supporting euthanasia or assisted suicide**. Deciding not to resuscitate a person because the resuscitation procedures would be unreasonably burdensome would be respecting their dignity and value, so many religious people support DNR decisions.

### Knowledge Check

1. What two things are beliefs about end-of-life issues often based on?
2. What is meant by the *sanctity of life*?
3. What it meant by *quality of life*?
4. What is a *do not resuscitate* order?
5. What is the humanist view on the right to die?
6. What do Catholic Christians believe about the right to die?
7. How might other Christians disagree with Catholic beliefs?
8. What is the slippery slope argument?

### Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

### Exam Question

c) Describe the difference between the Sanctity of Life and Quality of Life argument [5]



# RESURRECTION & THE SOUL

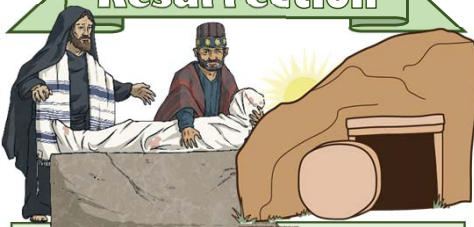
Catholic beliefs about what life after death is like are based on St Paul's analogy. It is offered as a possible explanation of what belief in a bodily resurrection might be like.



## Theories about Jesus' Resurrection

## St Paul: The Soul

### 1 Jesus' Resurrection



Catholic beliefs about life after death start with the Easter story. The resurrection of Jesus is an essential part of Christian belief. Each of the four Gospels includes scenes of the disciples finding the empty tomb. The body of Jesus was laid in a tomb on the Friday evening. Early on the Sunday morning some women went to the tomb to anoint to body. They found that the tomb was empty and Jesus' body was gone. The Apostles and some other disciples describe events where they met the risen Jesus.

This led them to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead and that this was a resurrection of the body.

This means that his body, not just his soul, had physically risen from the dead. **Belief in this event led the early Christians to believe that bodily resurrection and eternal life with God is possible for all people.** Like those first Christians, Catholics believe that because Jesus died for our sins and then overcame death by rising again, **now human beings will also experience resurrection of the body.**

### Early Christian Beliefs

At first the belief was that Jesus' resurrection would be followed quickly by all people being taken to the presence of God. Early Christian preaching was to encourage people to be ready for the return of Christ and the end of time. Those ideas are still part of the readings and liturgies during Advent.

**'Be on your guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.'**

Scholars refer to this as 'imminent eschatology', the belief that the end of time will be soon. Gradually, Christians began to realise that there was a responsibility to live now in the light of the resurrection. Preparation for eternal life in the presence of God involves resisting evil and doing good. Guided by the Holy Spirit, this world can be transformed by Christians following the teachings of Christ. The inspiration is found in the Lord's prayer:

**'...Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven.'**

### St Paul: Bodily Resurrection

Catholic belief in a bodily resurrection

What would this resurrection of the body mean for people? What would it be like?

In his first letter to the people of Corinth, **St Paul offers an explanation. He makes a distinction between earthly bodies and heavenly bodies.** The analogy he offers comes from nature. The grain of wheat is very different to the fully-grown plant. It ceases to be like that seed when it becomes a plant. Our observation of the world helps us understand that the existence of the seed has led to a different physical existence, that of the wheat plant. In a similar way, St Paul says that it is possible to understand a distinction between earthly, physical bodies and heavenly, spiritual bodies.

The grain of wheat vs the plant

The Resurrection of Jesus remains a matter of faith. It cannot be proven beyond all doubt but neither can it be disproved. Belief in the Resurrection would be weakened if it were proven that Jesus did not rise from the dead. Various alternative theories have been offered to explain the empty tomb:

- **Jesus' body was stolen:** Could the Romans or some others have stolen the body? Their motivation might have been to reduce the likelihood of Jesus' followers making extraordinary claims about him. This theory is countered by asking why did they not present Jesus' body when the Apostles started preaching that Jesus had risen from the dead?
- There have been some who have said **the Apostles themselves stole Jesus' body**, although that begs the question why would they have risked their own lives for something they knew to be untrue. The Gospel accounts emphasise that the tomb was guarded to protect it from robbery.
- **Jesus was revived:** Theories have been offered suggesting that Jesus **did not really die at all.** They suggest that he was given pain relief and that he merely seemed dead. Then perhaps the women were able to revive him when they went to the tomb. This is countered by asking why are there no stories about Jesus' life and death in the years that followed?

### Different Beliefs

- ✓ Some Christians believe that death is the end of bodily existence and **only the soul lives on.** They might use the accounts of near-death experiences as evidence of a separation of body and soul. Philosophers have a term for such a **clear distinction between body and soul**, they call it **'dualism'.**

- ✓ Some people use this dualism to explain a very different approach to life after death – **reincarnation.** Reincarnation is the belief that the soul continues to exist after death and may be placed in a different body. There are people who claim that they can remember past lives. This belief is not part of mainstream Christianity, nor of the other monotheistic religions (Judaism and Islam). Within religious beliefs reincarnation is associated with Hinduism and Buddhism.

- ✓ There are those who would simply reject each of these explanations and **reject any belief in a life after death.** Those people would simply say that death is the end of human life.

St Paul has an understanding of the soul that informs his explanation of what resurrection means. It is clear that he does not think that Jesus' body was simply revived. St Paul also rejected the view that humans are mere physical bodies with a finite existence on earth. **There is something about being human that gives us our identity; this is what he understood the soul to be.**

He also rejected the view that eternal life was restricted to 'disembodied' souls. It is not possible to fully understand human experience without a body. **So for St Paul, our earthly, physical identity is both body and soul. Our heavenly spiritual bodies are both body and soul.**

### Knowledge Check

1. When was Jesus' body laid in the tomb?
2. When was it discovered that Jesus' body had gone 'missing'?
3. What theories have been offered to explain Jesus' empty tomb? (Give three examples)
4. Who had an extraordinary encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus?
5. According to St Paul what is the soul?
6. What is imminent eschatology?
7. What is dualism?
8. What is reincarnation?

### Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

#### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

### Exam Question

*b) Describe Catholic teachings on the soul [5]*

## Summary

- Death is not the end; Christians believe there is an eternal life after death.
- Catholics do not accept euthanasia or assisted suicide; they believe there are alternatives.
- There are many different opinions about whether people should have the right to end their own lives.
- Due to Jesus' bodily resurrection, Catholics believe that the soul and the body are resurrected.
- There are different opinions about Jesus' resurrection and about what happens to us when we die.

### 4 St Paul had an extraordinary encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus after his resurrection.

**He explained the importance and meaning of this experience in the first of his letters to the Christian community in Corinth:**

*"But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection for the dead?" – 1 Corinthians 15:12*

*'For what I received I passed onto you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also...' 1 Corinthians 15:3–8*

*'So it will be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.' 1 Corinthians 15:42–45*

*'And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.' 1 Corinthians 15:49*



**Catholics** believe that God will judge them based on the actions of their life and based on this judgement they will either go to heaven or hell.



# JUDGEMENT: HEAVEN, PURGATORY & HELL

## Other Christian views on Judgement

Catholic teaching focuses on individual judgement. Each person is responsible for their own actions. Some Christians put the emphasis on a final judgement at the end of time, rather than an individual judgement. Jesus talked about a 'final judgement' when he would come to earth again and judge the whole of creation. This idea of a final day of judgement is present in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46) and in the Book of Revelation.

## Heaven

Those who have accepted God's grace and forgiveness in this life will enjoy eternal existence in God's presence after they die in the next life. This face-to-face encounter with God is what Christians call heaven. Throughout history, Christians have tried to find language and imagery to describe what this might mean. The language of 'up there', the 'presence of God', 'glorious splendor', the 'beatific vision', a 'transcendent place', and the imagery of 'clouds' and 'harp-playing angels' all try to offer ways of understanding a belief in eternal happiness in the presence of God. All such language and imagery are attempts to describe the indescribable. The reward for living correctly is to be eternally in the presence of God. Heaven is to be totally at one with God.

## Purgatory

This term comes from the same root as 'to purge'. It means to cleanse or get rid of sins. Catholic teaching accepts that people are not perfect. While trying to do their best, people will sometimes behave badly or act in ways that cause harm to others. In human relationships when people do something wrong, they can try and make it up to the other person. The same can apply to a person's relationship with God. Eternal life with God is about being in a state of perfection. Cleansing or purging those mistakes and errors in life enables the person to be fully in the presence of God. 'Purgatory' refers to the cleansing of people's sins before they can go on to heaven to spend eternal life with God.

Some art and literature presents purgatory as a place with fire between heaven and hell. This is because the Greek root word for fire is 'pur' and refers to the ancient practice of burning land in an attempt to cleanse it. St Paul uses the same fire imagery in his first letter to the Christians in Corinth:

'It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.' 1 Corinthians 3:13.

Rather than a 'place', Catholics use the term purgatory to refer to a state of hope. This is why Catholics pray for those who have died. Catholics pray for purification and removal of sin so that they can spend eternal life with God.

Heaven and hell are often depicted as real places with heaven being beautiful and peaceful and hell being dark and fiery, however Catholics understand heaven as being in the presence of God and hell as being excluded from his presence.



The New Testament has several stories told by Jesus that refer to a judgement being made about how people lived their lives. These include:

- ✓ *The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus*
- ✓ *The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant*

## Hell

If being in the presence of God is the reward then being separated from God is the punishment. Those who through their own free will ultimately reject God's grace and forgiveness, have chosen to live eternally outside of God's presence. This total lack of God for all eternity is what Christians call hell. The two parables (The Unforgiving Servant and The Rich Man and Lazarus) demonstrate that it is the free choices made by humans that led to them going to hell after death. It is not that God chooses to punish, it is that the individual chooses to reject the love, mercy, compassion and God. The imagery of fire and torture has been used by artists, writers and poets to explore the concept of being separated from God for eternity, but again, these are attempts to describe something that we cannot fully understand.

## Other Christian views on purgatory

Most Christians believe in heaven and hell but Protestant Christians do not accept the idea of purgatory. They simply believe that people either accept God and are in a state of grace with God, or they reject God.

- ✓ This idea of a final day of judgement is present in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31–46) and in the Book of Revelation.
- ✓ 'It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.'
- ✓ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward.' 1 Corinthians 3:13.
- ✓ Judgement: The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

## 7 The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus tells how a rich man ignored the needs of the poor, using the example of a man named Lazarus, who begged outside his house. Lazarus would beg while the rich man enjoyed his luxuries. The parable emphasises the injustice by saying that Lazarus would have welcomed even the bits of food that fell from the rich man's table. After death though, Lazarus is taken to be with God, while the rich man has an eternal life of 'torment' and misery. The rich man asks for some comfort, but he is reminded:

*'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.'* Luke 16:19–31.

Catholic teaching about judgement comes from this Christian understanding that each individual will be held to account by God for the things they do, or fail to do, during their lives.

## 8 The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

In the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant Jesus tells of a man who owes money to the king. Fearing being put in debtors' prison, the man begs the king for mercy. After receiving that mercy and being free from his debt, the man then goes in search of a man who owes him money. This other man asks him for mercy, however he rejects the requests for mercy. The king is furious about such hypocrisy and puts the first man in prison until he pays what he owes! Jesus finishes the story with these words:

*'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother and sister from your heart.'*

## Summary

- ✓ 'Eschatology' describes Christian ideas about what will happen at the 'end times'.
- ✓ Catholics believe in personal judgement; God will judge everyone on the basis of how they have lived their lives.
- ✓ 'Heaven' is being in the presence of God for eternity and 'hell' is the absence of God for eternity.
- ✓ Purgatory is the Catholic idea that, after death, people will be cleansed of sin before they can enter heaven.
- ✓ Other Christians hold different beliefs about judgement and about purgatory.

## Knowledge Check

1. What language is typically used to describe heaven?
2. Why is it difficult to describe what heaven is like?
3. What does *purgatory* mean?
4. Which Christians do not accept purgatory?
5. What is the Greek word for fire?
6. What imagery is typically used by artists, writers and poets to describe hell?
7. What do we learn from the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus?
8. What do we learn from the parable of the Unforgiving Servant?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
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### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

*b) Describe Catholic teaching on life after death [5]*

*b) Describe Catholic teaching on judgement [5]*

# THE MAGISTERIUM

The magisterium is the authority of the Pope and the bishops of the Church.

## The Bible

## Tradition

## The Magisterium 'Apostolic Succession'

The nature of the magisterium  
The Catholic Church has three distinct sources of authority to support its teaching about Christian beliefs:

The Bible as the Word of God is the primary source of authority for all Christians. Christians believe that the writers of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit and the Church believes that the Holy Spirit continues to work through the Church.

Over the centuries important theologians have explained beliefs to the Christian community. This is called the 'Tradition'.

The leaders of the Church, the popes and bishops, have also clarified and made statements on certain aspects of Catholic faith. Their particular authority is called the 'magisterium'.

The Latin word 'magister' means a 'master' or 'teacher'. After his resurrection Jesus gave the Apostles the instruction to **'make disciples of all nations'** (Matthew 28:18-20).

In this way they received their authority to teach the faith directly from Jesus. Catholics believe that the present Pope and bishops can trace their own appointment and ordination back to the first apostles.

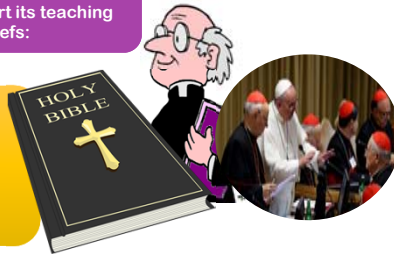
This is called the 'apostolic succession' and is why the Pope and bishops have the authority to make statements about the Catholic faith.



### SOURCES OF WISDOM AND AUTHORITY

Jesus gave the Apostles the instruction to **'make disciples of all nations'** (Matthew 28:18-20). Catholics believe that the Pope and bishops can trace their appointment and ordination back to the first apostles. That is why they have authority. This is known as 'apostolic succession'.

You will also need to know about the documents published at the Second Vatican Council, in particular the four key documents known as 'Constitution'.



## Ordinary Magisterium

Popes and bishops regularly preach the Good News in homilies and in their regular letters to their dioceses. Most often, these are to encourage faith and devotion, clarify a point of faith or to give instructions. The most well-known are those written by the Pope. These are called encyclicals and an example is *Evangelium Vitae* (Gospel of Life). This was written by Pope St John Paul II to clarify the Church's responses to a variety of modern ethical issues that affect the sanctity of life.

**'Taking into account these distinctions, in harmony with the magisterium of my predecessors and in communion with the Bishops of the Catholic Church, I confirm that ...'** *Evangelium Vitae* 65 – Pope St John Paul II 1995.

The function of the magisterium is to present Catholic teaching in the modern context. It is important for the Church to be able to respond to issues that were not considered by the writers of the Bible (such as IVF and genetic engineering). The authority of the magisterium gives confidence to the next generation of Catholics that they are following the Church's teaching as they face the issues of modern society.

## Extraordinary Magisterium

Sometimes the Church needs to respond to specific disputes or particular circumstances. These have more importance than the ordinary teaching role of the Pope and the bishops, so they are called the 'extraordinary magisterium'.

### Conciliar magisterium:

Sometimes the bishops of the Church are asked to sit in a General Council. The task of a General Council is to explore matters of significance to the life of the Church. This could be a specific doctrine or guiding the Church's response to developments in the modern world. The first record of a General Council is in the Bible (Acts 15) when the leaders of the Christian community gathered in Jerusalem to decide what procedures were required of new converts to Christianity.

The decisions made at these General Councils have great significance in the life of the Catholic Church, for example, the decisions of the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople resulted in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which is still regularly said in churches on Sundays (see page 88). The Council of Trent (1545-63) responded to the Protestant Reformation by, for example, reinforcing Catholic belief that Christ is fully present in the Eucharist.

The Conciliar magisterium is an example of the bishops of the Church working together to make sure that they are speaking to the worldwide Church. This working together also includes synods, such as the 2015 Synod on the Family.

### Pontifical magisterium:

Another form of 'extraordinary magisterium' concerns specific and rare declarations by a pope.

The Pope has the authority to make the final decision on some disputed matters of faith or morals. The rules for such declarations were finally set down by a General Council in 1870. They are called **ex cathedra declarations**.

Before making such a declaration, the Pope is expected to **consult widely, have discussions with key advisers and spend time in prayer**. When a pope makes an ex cathedra statement in this way the teaching is considered to be without error (infallible).

It is important to note that this papal infallibility is limited to faith and morals. The use of this form of extraordinary also includes synods, such as the 2015 Synod on the Family.

## Summary

- Catholics use the Bible, Tradition and Magisterium as sources of authority.
- Magisterium can be 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary'.
- Pontifical magisteria are rare, but Catholics believe these teachings to be infallible (without error/mistake).
- The last extraordinary magisterium was the Second Vatican Council which led to many significant changes and developments.

## Knowledge Check

- What are the three main sources of authority in the Catholic Church?
- What is meant by the term *apostolic succession*?
- What is meant by *extraordinary magisterium*?
- What instruction did Jesus give to the Apostles in Matthew 28: 18-20?
- What is the function of the magisterium?
- What is the role of a General Council?
- What does the Latin word *magister* mean?
- What must a pope do before making an ex cathedra statement?

## Choose a Task

- Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
- Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
- Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

**b) Describe Catholic belief on the role of the Magisterium [5]**



# The Second Vatican Council

## Knowledge Check



1. When was the Second Vatican Council?
2. What was the Second Vatican Council in response to?
3. How many documents were published?
4. What are the four key documents known as?
5. What does the document *Dei Verbum* contain? (write a summary)
6. What does the document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* contain? (write a summary)
7. What does the document *Lumen Gentium* contain? (write a summary)
8. What does the document *Gaudium et Spes* contain? (write a summary)

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

- b) Describe the purpose and importance of Vatican II [5]  
c) Explain the teachings of Vatican II [8]

## Who?

Called by **Pope St John Paul XXIII**  
Completed under **Pope Paul VI**

## What?

The Council published **sixteen documents**. These documents were about how the Catholic Church needed to change in order to change with society. The most important of these documents are known as 'Constitution.'

## When?

**1960's**  
Called by Pope St John XXIII on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1962 and completed its work under Pope Paul VI on 8 December 1965.

## Where?

The **Vatican**, in Rome. It is named 'Second Vatican Council' as it was the second council to be held there.

## Why?

The Second World War ended in 1945. In the years that followed there was considerable change in society, technology and in politics. John XXIII became Pope in 1958 and wanted the Catholic Church to respond to these changes and to represent the faith in this new context.

The Second Vatican Council was the Catholic Church's response to the challenges of the modern world. It published sixteen documents stating the Church's position on different issues.



## The four key documents **CONSTITUTION**

Four of the documents of Second Vatican Council were given the title of 'Constitution'. This made them the most important of the sixteen documents published. These have been guiding the Catholic Church since **1965**.

### 2. Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)

This document covers changes to the Church's liturgy, which means the official public worship of the Church.

Before the Council most people attended Mass that was said in Latin. Everyone, priest and people, faced the altar to emphasise the link between the Eucharist and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

The reforms encouraged by Vatican II were that the people should be more involved, have better understanding of the symbolism and be able to understand what was being said. So the words were translated into the local language and the altar was moved so that the priest now faces the people and his actions are more easily seen.

In addition, the lectionary has been revised so that Catholics get a richer and wider selection of Bible readings at church.

Changes to the Mass (e.g. no longer in Latin, facing the people, a wider selection of readings...)

### 3. Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)

The First Vatican Council produced documents about the roles of the Pope, the bishops and priests.

The Second Vatican Council wanted to make sure that all members of the Church knew that they had important roles to play.

Lumen Gentium means 'the light of the peoples' and this document encouraged ordinary Catholics to take a more active role to be part of the mission of the Church and to serve Jesus.

This means that all Catholics should act on the promise they made at their baptism to be 'lights to the world' by being of service to others.

### Emphasised the importance of taking an **ACTIVE** role in the Church

### 4 Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)

This document was published at the end of the Council in 1965.

In the years before the Council, the Catholic Church was seen as being separate from the rest of world.

Gaudium et Spes was written to respond to the changes in society, the issues of poverty and social justice, the impact of science and technology and, above all, to encourage the people of faith to engage with the modern world.

By working for peace and social justice, Pope John XXIII wanted the Catholic Church to be a source of 'joy and hope' to the world.

Gaudium et Spes set the foundations and principles that later enabled the charity CAFOD to be set up to respond to the needs of the developing world.

The influence of this document has been dramatic. In the years since Vatican II

- dioceses and parishes have set up Justice and Peace Groups to consider local peace and justice issues
- international organisations like Pax Christi, which works for peace, have been created
- national organisations, such as the Catholic Association for Racial Justice, have developed.

Responding to changes in society, poverty, social justice, impact of science and technology and how to engage people in their faith in the modern world

### 1. Dei Verbum (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)

This is the document that sets out the relationship between the Bible, Tradition and the Magisterium.

It explains how these are each inspired by the Holy Spirit and have authority for the Catholic Church.

It also emphasises the importance of proper biblical scholarship, which means the study of the different literary styles in the Bible and the historical context of the Bible writers.

It also encourages Catholics to use the Bible as part of their prayers. It has led to an increase in specialist biblical scholars and more Bible study groups in parishes.

### Using the Bible effectively

# SARCOPHAGI: 'Jesus' Passion'

Passion: Latin:  
Suffering

Who?

The scene depicts Jesus' final days, including his trial, death and resurrection.

What?

Sarcophagi are stone coffins that have carved images on them. The images often feature scenes from the Bible or the lives of saints.

This particular sarcophagi has a variety of images that reinforce the belief that Jesus' death and resurrection were a triumph over sin and a sign of hope. The entire decoration is based on the Passion and resurrection of Jesus.

When?

It dates from the 4th Century.

Where?

The Museo Pio Cristiano in the Vatican, Rome.

Why?

Humans often use images and symbols to help explore ideas and to find ways of expressing beliefs.

The Jesus' Passion sarcophagi expressed beliefs about death, resurrection and eternal life.



The sarcophagus in the Museo Pio Cristiano in Rome is decorated with images showing events from the last days of Jesus' life

## The Cross: Chi-Rho Symbol of Resurrection

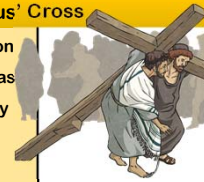
For the centre piece there is a stylised cross with the Chi-Rho symbol representing Jesus. The Chi-Rho is an ancient symbol of the resurrection. It is formed from the first two letters of the title 'Christ' in Greek (Chi = X, Rho = P). When merged together they form the 'Chi-Rho'. To reinforce the fact that Jesus' death was a victory over sin, the Chi-Rho is placed within a wreath that is held in the beaks of two eagles. The wreath is the Roman symbol of victory. The eagles represent God because in Roman religion they were used to represent the god Jupiter. This cross sits above two soldiers who are looking up at it in awe.



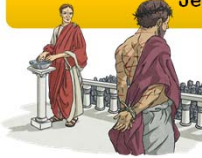
The Chi-Rho is a traditional symbol for the Resurrection of Jesus

## Simon of Cyrene: Carrying Jesus' Cross

On one panel there is an illustration of the scene where a man known as Simon of Cyrene was instructed by the Romans to carry Jesus' cross to the crucifixion.



## Jesus' Trial before Pilate



Another panel shows Jesus being presented for trial before the Roman governor Pilate.

## The Crown of Thorns

The next panel shows Jesus being given a crown of thorns by the soldiers guarding him – they gave him the crown to mock him as he was accused of calling himself King of the Jews. However, the crown in the image is actually filled with jewels which symbolises that Jesus' death was actually a triumph over sin.



## Pilate Washes his Hands of the Blame



Next to it is the scene of Pilate, who did not want to execute Jesus but gave in to the pressure of the crowd and the Jewish authorities, washing his hands to symbolise that he wouldn't take responsibility for crucifying Jesus.

## Summary

- The sarcophagus with scenes of the Passion conveys Christian beliefs about eternal life

## Knowledge Check

- What are sarcophagi?
- What does the 'Jesus' Passion' sarcophagus depict?
- What does the word *passion* translate to?
- What are the four main events of the Passion?
- What does the Chi-Rho symbol represent?
- What is the wreath a symbol of?
- Why is the crown of thorns filled with jewels?
- Why is Pilate depicted washing his hands?

## Choose a Task

- Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
- Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
- Create a poster/leaflet

## CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

*b) Describe how the Sarcophagus reflects Catholic belief in life after death [5]*

## What is meant by Jesus' *Passion*?

This term comes from the Latin word for 'suffering' and is used to refer to the suffering Jesus endured during the last few days of his life. The Gospels describe the main events of the Passion:

- Garden of Gethsemane:** Where Jesus prayed for the strength to face the difficulties he was to endure. This was where he was arrested.
- Two trials:** Jesus appeared before the Jewish authorities to face religious charges. He then was tried by the Roman official (Pontius Pilate) and charged with rebellion.
- Suffering:** Under instructions from Pilate, Jesus was whipped, hit and had a crown made out of thorns placed on his head.
- Crucifixion:** This is a cruel and painful way to die. Jesus was nailed to a cross (nails in the hands and the feet). The Gospel accounts say that he was on the cross for six hours. Eventually, his body could take no more and he died. The soldiers checked that he was dead before removing him from the cross and placing him in a tomb.



The Garden of Gethsemane scene shows Jesus humanity, where he struggles to come to terms with his fate.

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." <sup>37</sup> He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. <sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

<sup>39</sup> Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

<sup>40</sup> Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. <sup>41</sup> "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

<sup>42</sup> He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." (Matthew 26)



Paschal =  
Pesach

# THE PASCHAL CANDLE

Also known as the 'Easter Candle'

## Knowledge Check

1. When is the paschal candle lit?
2. Which Hebrew word does *paschal* come from?
3. What does the paschal candle represent?
4. What are the four key symbols on the paschal candle?
5. What do the five studs represent?
6. What do the alpha and omega symbols represent?
7. Historically, which sacrament took place at the Easter Vigil?
8. What is the *Triduum*?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

c) Explain why the paschal candle is used in the Easter Vigil and during a Catholic baptism [8]

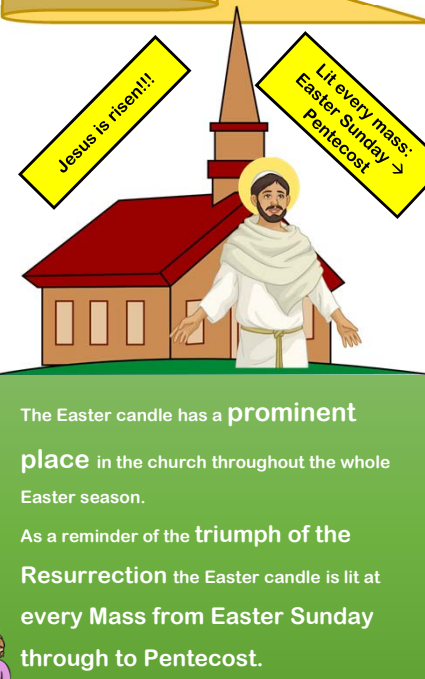
## The Triduum

Each year during Holy Week the events of the last week of Jesus' life feature in a series of liturgies. The most important of them are three from the 'triduum':

- **Holy Thursday:** Mass of the Last Supper to remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples
- **Good Friday:** a commemoration of the Crucifixion
- **Easter Vigil:** in remembrance of the Resurrection

## Summary

- The Paschal candle conveys Christian beliefs that the Resurrection brought humankind light and hope. The symbols on it are a reminder of the Crucifixion through which Jesus brought salvation.
- The Paschal candle is used at Easter (the festival that remembers the Crucifixion and Resurrection) and at baptisms as a reminder that 'the light of the world' has defeated death and that salvation from sin is possible.



The Paschal candle represents Jesus' light overcoming sin and it is decorated with symbols to show this.

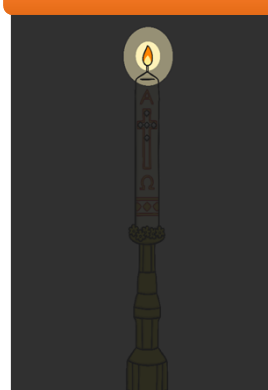
The five wounds: The candle has five studs on it to represent the five wounds Jesus received during his crucifixion.

The cross: This is the symbol of Christian faith because it is due to the crucifixion of Christ that the Resurrection was possible.

The year: Each year the candle is marked with that particular year. It reminds people that Jesus is the same for all time and that the salvation earned by Jesus is as real now as it was in the past. The candle will be used by the Church until the following Easter, especially at baptisms.

The 'Alpha' and 'Omega': These are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. They symbolise Christ as the 'first' and the 'last'; the 'beginning' of all things and the 'end' of all things.

## The Flame



The candle represents the eternal presence of Christ. The lighting of the flame is to help people remember that Jesus is the Light of the World and that before he came, the world was in spiritual darkness.



"The Light of Christ"

## The Easter candle and baptism

Historically, baptisms took place at the Easter Vigil. Many parishes still baptise adults during the Easter Vigil. Baptism is the sacrament of entry into the Church. Water is used during the baptism ceremony to symbolise that sin is washed away by Jesus. The water used to baptise the new Christians during the Easter Vigil is blessed using the Easter candle.

The Easter candle is used in other baptisms throughout the year. To remind the people of the Resurrection, it is lit and placed near to the font. A smaller baptismal candle is lit from its flame and is given to the baptised person or their family to remind them that the 'Light of Christ' has defeated the darkness of sin. The liturgy encourages them to keep the light of faith 'burning brightly'. A further link to Easter is contained in the instructions to priests that, where possible, baptisms should take place on Sundays. This is because Sunday is the weekly reminder of the celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ.

## Who?

The candle represents the **eternal presence of Jesus Christ** and his light overcoming sin. It features in **Catholic** churches.

## What?

The name '**Paschal**' comes from the Hebrew word **Pesach** which means Passover.

In the Church, at the Saturday vigil before Easter Sunday, a 'new' fire is lit. The candle is then lit from this sacred fire. There are four key symbols on the paschal candle: the five wounds, the cross, the year and the alpha and omega.

## When?

It is lit throughout **Easter** time and then relit for **baptisms** and other special events including feast days in the year.

## Where?

The candle has a **prominent place** in the **church** throughout the Easter season so that it is visible to all.

## Why?

It is a **special candle** that symbolises the fact that Jesus' resurrection was a triumph over death.

## It begins here!

At the beginning of the Easter Vigil the church is in darkness. Outside the church a fire is lit. The Easter (Paschal) candle is lit from that fire and processed into the church. This symbolises the 'light of Christ' overcoming the 'darkness of sin'. The procession is completed with an ancient hymn, called the **Exultet**, that proclaims Jesus' triumph over sin because his resurrection defeats death. The candle itself has a variety of symbols on it to reinforce belief in this triumph over sin:

"The light of Christ, rising in Glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds."



# THE CATHOLIC MASS, MUSIC AND WORSHIP

1

## The Introductory Rites

The greeting, Penitential Act and Collect (also referred to as the opening prayer) that form the beginning of the Mass.

Many people find that music can help them pray, as it can help them express themselves in different ways. Recorded music can support an individual in prayer and live music is often used in churches to help the community bring their prayers together.

## The Catholic Mass

The exam will not have specific questions about the structure of the Catholic Mass, however it is useful to know that it has distinct sections.

2

## Liturgy of the Word

This part of the Mass takes place at the ambo (a pulpit or lectern). The focus of this part of the Mass is on the readings from the Bible that are being proclaimed. On Sundays there would be three readings, usually one from the Old Testament, followed by a psalm that follows the same theme. The second reading is usually from one of the New Testament 'letters'. The most important reading is the Gospel. The community stands to hear the words of Christ, read by the priest or deacon. The Gospel is often greeted in song. The priest or deacon explains the meaning of the Gospel in the homily (sermon). The community says the Creed together and prays for the needs of the community.

## Which type of music is best for worship?

Through the centuries numerous composers and hymn writers have created music for prayer. There is a wide range of musical styles available, but there are differences of opinion within the Catholic community (and other Christian communities) about what is the best way to use music in prayer.

- Some Catholics would say that traditional Latin music is the best way to appreciate the beauty and majesty of the liturgy.
- Others would say that the older hymns are more appropriate church music and the words of the classic hymn writers are more poetic.
- Others would say that the Church needs to sing in the style of the younger generation, otherwise it is not speaking to them at all.

4

## The Concluding Rites

The Mass ends with the final prayers, blessing and dismissal.

3

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

The focus is on the altar, where the priest says the Eucharistic prayer.

This is the great 'thanksgiving prayer' that recalls the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. This is when Catholics believe the bread and wine become the 'body and blood' of Jesus. Catholics refer to this as 'Real Presence' and 'Blessed Sacrament'. The community says the Lord's Prayer together, offer each other a sign of peace and receive the 'body and blood' of Jesus during the distribution of communion.

## Knowledge Check

1. What are the four parts of the Catholic Mass?
2. What is the alleluia?
3. What is the gloria?
4. What are eucharistic acclamations?
5. What is the purpose of the eucharistic acclamations? (what do they highlight?)
6. When are hymns typically used?
7. What are the Psalms and what do they express?
8. Which religious communities have built on the Psalms?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

## CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

c) Explain how and why music is used in the liturgy [8]

## Music in the Liturgy:

The Catholic Mass has several elements which are appropriate to sing:

Alleluia

**Alleluia:** This is a chant for **welcoming the Gospel**. To acknowledge the importance of listening to the teaching of the Gospel, the congregation stand and the alleluia is chanted. Where possible the alleluia should be sung.

The Gloria

**The Gloria:** This is a great **song of praise for God**. The words can bring a greater sense of joy or awe/wonder through music.

Eucharistic Acclamations

**Eucharistic Acclamations:** These are the chants that the **congregation says/sings during the Liturgy of the Eucharist**. They are the 'Holy, Holy', the 'Memorial Acclamations' and the 'Great Amen'. They **punctuate the great prayer of thanksgiving at which the bread and wine become the 'body and blood of Christ'**. Marking these moments with sung responses highlights their **solemnity and importance**. These can be sung in a variety of different styles ranging from the very modern to more traditional styles in Latin.

Hymns

**Hymns:** There is a wide number of hymns in the Christian tradition. Many parishes use hymns at the **start and the end of Mass**. Hymns can be appropriate to **support quiet prayer** at, or after, the distribution of communion. Hymns are also used sometimes to **accompany the procession of the gifts of bread and wine** before the Eucharistic prayer.

## The Psalms

In the Old Testament, the Psalms are ancient collections of Jewish prayers and hymns to God. They express emotions; from joy and praise, to anxiety and despair. These have been sources of prayer for the Christian community since the time of Christ. This is because Jesus, and most of the first Christians, had lived most of their lives as part of the Jewish community. The Psalms would have been important to their worship and it is no surprise, therefore, that they used them in prayer.

The religious communities of monks and nuns built on these types of prayer. Their daily prayers were based around the biblical prayer from the Psalms. Gradually they developed ways of singing or chanting the Psalms to add to the beauty of the prayers. The most famous of those styles is known as 'Gregorian chant'. It is a type of chant that was developed for them to sing together without musicians. Psalms are still sung in monasteries, convents and cathedrals today.

At the Catholic Mass, the Liturgy of the Word includes a psalm selected to reflect the theme of the reading that comes before it. Parishes are encouraged to sing the psalm where possible and many have been set to music by modern composers. Chant versions of the psalms are also available.



# THE CATHOLIC FUNERAL RITE

## Symbols on the coffin

The coffin is covered in a white cloth, called a 'pall'. This is a reminder of baptism when the newly baptised person is presented with a white garment as a symbol of being washed clean of the sin that separates humans from God. Also, because every coffin is covered in a pall, it is a reminder that all are equal in the eyes of God. So everyone is worthy of salvation through Christ.

The Book of the Gospels is sometimes placed on the coffin. This is to remind people that Christians live by the teachings Jesus gives and the example he sets in the Gospel and that by doing this they will have eternal life. A cross is often placed on the coffin. The baptism ceremony includes the priest or deacon making the sign of the cross on the person to mark their joining the Christian community. It is through Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection that he defeated death and brought salvation for humans.

*'In baptism, (name) received the sign of the cross. May he/she now share in Christ's victory over death.'*

The Paschal candle is often placed beside the coffin as a symbol of belief in the Resurrection. Flowers may be placed on the coffin but in moderation, so that they do not hide these important symbols of faith and hope.

## Liturgical colour and final commendation

Priests wear white at Easter for a funeral, the liturgical colour of the Resurrection, and may wear white for the rest of the year, or purple, which is a sign of mourning. As with all the parts of the funeral, the purpose is to express Christian hope in the Easter story and faith that the deceased person will have eternal life with God after death, which is also expressed in the prayers of the Final Commendation:

*'May the angels lead you into paradise: may the martyrs come to welcome you and take you to the holy city, the new and eternal Jerusalem.'*

A variety of symbols and actions are used during a Catholic funeral to remind the family and friends of the deceased person of their faith in the Resurrection. The purpose is to allow the family to grieve for the dead person, to celebrate the love they have for them and to find comfort in the hope that they have gone on to eternal life with God.



## Symbolic actions

At the beginning and end of the funeral the coffin is sprinkled with holy water. The coffin is also sprinkled with holy water before being buried or cremated. Once again this is a reminder of the water used in baptisms and the gift of eternal life. The accompanying prayer is:

*'In the waters of baptism, (name) died with Christ and rose with him to new life. May he/she now share with him eternal glory.'*

At the end of the funeral the coffin is incensed as a sign of honouring the person, whose body was a temple of the Holy Spirit. The incense also symbolises the prayers of those gathered rising up to God.

Processions are a traditional way of acknowledging the importance of the occasion. It is common for the coffin to be carried out of the church in a solemn procession. It brings the community together to show the grieving relatives and friends that everyone present is in solidarity with them.

## Sources of Wisdom and Authority

Key quotations have been highlighted.

## Summary

- Requiem uses serene, calm melodies to convey beliefs about death and eternal life, for example, that the Resurrection gives hope and that death is not to be feared. Instruments such as harp and violin and soprano voices give the composition a sense of the 'heavenly'.
- A Catholic funeral uses symbols, prayers and readings to convey beliefs about eternal life.

## Catholic Beliefs about Eternal Life: Fauré's Requiem

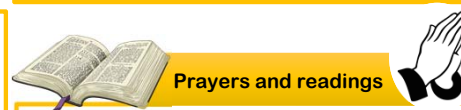
Many classical composers have used Christian liturgy as a source of inspiration for their work. There are several well-known versions of music composed for funerals. These are known by the term 'requiem', which is from the Latin for 'rest'.

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) composed a requiem that is full of beautiful melodies. Written just after the death of his father and first performed just before the death of his mother, the requiem brings a sense of calm and peace. **In the requiem he wanted to show that you could be sad about the death of loved ones while also hoping that after death they had gone on to eternal life with God. Fauré said that he did not want to express a fear of death.** Instead the requiem focuses on the hope that the dead will be in heaven and he expresses this in the music using harps, violins and the sound of angelic sopranos.

*'It has been said that my Requiem does not express the fear of death and someone has called it a lullaby of death. But it is thus that I see death: as a happy deliverance, an aspiration towards happiness above, rather than as a painful experience.'* Gabriel Fauré.

The Final Commendation is the part of the funeral where the mourners say their final goodbye to the dead person.

The *In Paradisum* is a prayer that is sometimes used in the Final Commendation. It asks for the deceased to be welcomed into paradise. Fauré's music for In Paradisum reflects this hope. The gentleness of the music reflects the tranquility of life's trials being left behind and the music rises and soars before fading. The music of this section of Fauré's requiem is lighter and more delicate than previous sections, and has a steady, rhythmic beat. The choir sings in a higher pitch, sounding like the angels in heaven. Like the symbols and symbolic actions in the funeral, Fauré's music helps the grieving to have faith, comfort and hope. It does not focus on sadness, but on the peaceful and fear-free nature of death. In contrast, Verdi's Requiem 'Dies Irae' ('Day of Wrath') has loud, violent music that changes rapidly and conveys restlessness. The singing sounds like wailing and it is very different to the sense of calm and tranquillity in Fauré's requiem. Fauré himself said: **'...my Requiem is dominated from beginning to end by a very human feeling of faith in eternal rest.'**



## Prayers and readings

The readings from Scripture will be chosen to remind those present of the promise of resurrection and eternal life. Those readings will be a source of comfort for those grieving and a declaration of hope.

The prayers throughout the funeral will refer to baptism, to Easter and the Resurrection, to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and the fact that because of this, Christians can hope for eternal life after death.

The priest or deacon will use their homily (sermon) to explain the Christian belief that Jesus defeated death through his resurrection and that this means that Christians can hope to have an eternal life with God after death. This should bring further comfort to the family and friends. The prayers of intercession will include prayers for the dead, for the grieving family and friends and for the wider community.

Although not a requirement of the funeral rite, many funerals in Catholic churches would include the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This would be particularly appropriate if the deceased or members of the family regularly attended Mass. Some funerals include a short 'eulogy'. This is a where a relative or friend speaks about the life of the deceased person and can be a celebration of their positive contribution to the lives of their family and friends.

## Knowledge Check

- What is the name of the white cloth that covers the coffin?
- What two things does the white cloth remind us of?
- Why is the Book of the Gospels sometimes placed on the coffin?
- When and why is the coffin sprinkled with holy water?
- For what two reasons is the coffin incensed?
- What is the Latin term for rest?
- What did Gabriel Fauré want to show in his requiem?
- What do the prayers throughout the funeral refer to?

## Choose a Task

- Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
- Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
- Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

- b) Describe how Faure's requiem reflects Catholic belief in eternal life [5]*  
*b) Describe how the Catholic funeral right reflects Catholic belief in life after death [5]*



The coffin is incensed which means the priest walks around the coffin with incense to honour the dead person.

The pall placed over the coffin symbolises the white robes the priest wears at baptisms and also that everyone is equal in the eyes of God.

# PRAYER WITHIN CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) defines prayer as:

*‘... the raising of the mind and heart to God, or the petition of good things from him in accord with his will’ (CCC 534).*

Prayer can be more than simply asking for something or reciting a familiar set of words. As the definition above indicates, prayer is about setting aside time to be in the presence of God. Regular prayer can become a habit that deepens a relationship with God. This is what ‘raising the mind and heart to God’ can mean for Christians.

## Prayers of various kinds suit different occasions

### Adoration

God is wonderful!

This is when Christians simply acknowledge that God is wonderful and worthy of praise. Such prayer could be to sit silently to worship God. Other times Christians may use words or songs to express adoration. In the Catholic tradition, many parishes (and schools) place the Blessed Sacrament on display so that people can pray quietly and adore God who is present in the Eucharist. The Catholic practice of starting prayer with the words ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’ is itself an act of prayerful adoration.

### Thanksgiving

Thank you God!

As the term suggests, it is common for people to thank God. People give thanks for the wonderful things that happen, for answers to prayers and simply for the wonder of creation. For Catholics, the most important act of thanksgiving is the Liturgy of the Eucharist during the Mass. ‘Eucharist’ is a Greek word that translates as ‘thanksgiving’, and this part of the Mass is prayer that gives thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus in his death and resurrection.

### Repentance

Sorry!

When Christians sin they feel sorry and express regret about having sinned – this is called repentance. Catholics repent during a section of the Mass called the penitential rite. For more significant sins Catholics can seek the Sacrament of Reconciliation to experience more personally God’s forgiving response to repentance.

### Intercession

Please help my friend...

These are the prayers that ask God to help others. Most Christians will have intercessory prayer during their regular Sunday acts of worship. At every Mass there are intercessory (or bidding) prayers.

### Petitions

Please help me...

Individual Christians will ask God to help them. They will ‘petition’ God to respond to their own needs.

## Extempore (random) Prayers

The risk of formulaic prayers is that people become so familiar with them that they simply repeat them and they lose their meaning. There will also be times when the formulas do not express the feelings and wishes of the person.

Extempore prayer is when Christians use their own words to speak with God. It is possible for people to use their own words to ‘raise their hearts and minds to God’ in a more spontaneous way.

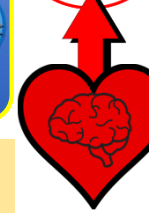
There are some Christians, including some Catholics, who feel so moved by the Holy Spirit that they worship God with unusual sounds. This is called ‘charismatic’ prayer or praying in ‘tongues’.

## Formulaic (‘set’) prayers

There are a great number of prayers that have been said by Christians over the centuries. Some have been written down and collected in prayer books. Many Christians like to use these when they pray because they believe they come from people who were close to God. Some of these ‘formulaic’ prayers are similar to a ‘formula’, in that the same words are said in the same way every time. They are often very well-known and provide a source of inspiration for many, for example, The Lord’s Prayer (Our Father), Glory Be, or the Hail Mary.

Some formulaic prayers have become extended, so that set prayers are repeated. This helps to stop people becoming distracted and enables them to pray more deeply. Examples include:

- The ‘Jesus Prayer’ is when the person simply repeats the name ‘Jesus’ or a statement like ‘Jesus, I love you’.
- The Rosary is another example of this technique within the Catholic community. There is a formula for reciting the most familiar prayers (‘Our Father’, ‘Hail Mary’ and ‘Glory Be’) so that Catholics can meditate on the ‘mysteries’ of faith (see pages 114–115).
- A more complicated formulaic prayer is the Liturgy of the Hours. This involves reciting psalms, Scripture readings, canticles (songs from the Bible text) and intercessions at different times of the day. Priests, nuns and monks promise to say these prayers every day. Some lay people join in with part of these prayers when they can.



“The raising of the heart and mind to God”

# Summary

- ✓ Prayer is ‘the raising of the mind and heart to God’.
- ✓ Prayers can be ‘set’ or more spontaneous.
- ✓ Prayers can have different purposes, for example, to praise, thank or request.
- ✓ The Lord’s Prayer (‘Our Father’) was taught by Jesus himself and includes different types of prayer within it.
- ✓ Catholics believe that their prayers can intercede on behalf of someone who has died and that God can be asked to welcome them into eternal life.

## Praying for the dead

Within the Catholic community there is long tradition of praying for the dead. These prayers are intercessions on behalf of the person who has died, asking God to welcome them into his presence so they can have eternal life in heaven. The most commonly used prayer is:

**‘Eternal rest grant unto him/her, O Lord. Let perpetual light shine upon him/her. May he/she rest in peace. Amen. May his/her soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.’**

Another feature of praying for the dead is the practice of asking priests to offer a Mass for a relative or friend who has died. On such occasions, the priest will remember that person in his own prayers during the Mass. The person’s name may be mentioned during the Eucharistic prayer. Within that prayer there is always a formula of words to remember those who have died and a variation that enables an individual to be named.



## The Lord’s Prayer

The best known formulaic prayer is the Lord’s Prayer (the ‘Our Father’). It is called the Lord’s Prayer because the Gospels tell us that these words were Jesus’ instructions on how to pray (Matthew 6:9–13).

## Knowledge Check

- What does the Catechism of the Catholic Church define prayer as?
- What are the five different types of prayer?
- What is extempore prayer?
- What is formulaic prayer?
- What is the best known formulaic prayer?
- What is meant by charismatic prayer?
- What will a priest do when asked to offer a Mass for a relative or friend who has died?
- What is the Liturgy of the Hours?

## Choose a Task

- Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
- Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
- Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

*c) Explain the importance of different types of prayer for Catholics [8]*



# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

## What is crime?

Crime can be defined as an action that breaks the law. Laws are made by the government of a country. As such they can be very different in different countries and what is lawful can change over time. Laws are there to protect the weak, give guidance on acceptable behaviour and allow people to live safely and without fear. The role of the police is to detect and prevent crime; the role of the justice system is to enforce the laws and punish those who break them.

## What is sin?

A sin is an action which goes against the will of God. Some sins are crimes, for example, murder. Other sins such as adultery are not against the law.

## What is the difference?

A crime is something that is against the law of a country, whereas a sin is against God's will. Some things, for example stealing, might be both a sin and a crime.

## Making Moral Decisions

Crime and sin are linked because they are about what is right and wrong or good and bad behaviour. The set of principles we use for deciding what is right and wrong is known as morality. Making decisions on how we behave is complex, but put very simply there are two common forms of morality:

### Relative Morality

This is the idea that a moral principle can be adapted or adjusted in certain situations. So stealing in principle is wrong, but if someone has no other way to get food, then stealing is justifiable. Killing is usually wrong, but if someone kills in self-defense, then it may be acceptable.

### Absolute Morality

This is when a person holds a principle such as 'stealing is wrong' and never alters it. This applies to all situations, no matter what the context or circumstance. So even if someone was starving it would not be right for them to steal a loaf of bread. Stealing is always wrong. Another example would be the belief that it is wrong to kill. This would apply in all situations such as war, abortion and euthanasia.

## Why do we punish?

When a criminal is found guilty of a crime, there are a number of punishment options available to a judge, such as fines, community service and prison. A judge will consider several different purposes when sentencing a person for the crime they have committed.



### Deterrence – put people off!

Deterrence means to discourage, or put someone off committing a crime. Punishment may put someone off doing that action again. It also makes an example of the criminal and seeing the punishment given might deter someone else from doing the same thing. This is often one of the main arguments for the death penalty. Execution for murder should put others off committing murder. However, many argue that deterrence does not work and that people are not really discouraged by the example of others receiving punishment.

Deterrence also has to be just. Punishments should be no harsher than they need to be to put criminals off. The threat of hanging would probably deter someone from speeding but it would not be fair.

### Retribution – make them pay!

Retribution is the idea that punishment should make criminals pay for what they have done wrong. To put it simply, this means getting even or taking revenge. It makes the victim of a crime feel a sense of justice that the offender got what they deserved. This goes with the Old Testament idea of 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth', but it does not reflect Jesus' teaching that we should 'turn the other cheek' and not seek revenge.

Sometimes victims feel that criminals do not get severe enough punishment, or there is a fear that the punishment could be too harsh. For Christians, the punishment has to be connected to justice and not revenge.

### Rehabilitation – help them start again!

Rehabilitation Punishment should help the offender to see what they have done wrong and to change their behaviour so they do not repeat the offence. It is the idea that criminals can somehow be 'cured' if we understand why they commit crimes and help them to change. This may mean providing criminals with education, counselling, skills or training so they can become productive members of society and avoid breaking the law again. This is also known as reform. It is really the only type of punishment that works in the long term because if criminals are not reformed, they will continue to commit crime when they are released from prison. Rehabilitation is the aim of punishment which is most in line with Christian ideas on forgiveness. However, some see it as being soft on criminals and not really a punishment at all.



## Knowledge Check

1. What is a crime?
2. What is a sin?
3. What is the definition of morality?
4. What is relative morality?
5. What is absolute morality?
6. What is deterrence?
7. What is retribution?
8. What is rehabilitation?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

*b) Describe the difference between crime and sin [5]*

*b) Describe the difference between absolute and relative morality [5]*

## Summary

- A crime is an offence against the law and a sin is an offence against God
- There are several aims of punishment such as retribution, deterrence and rehabilitation
- At the heart of the Christian message is forgiveness. Christians should follow Jesus' teaching and example
- The Catholic Church has allowed, but not encouraged capital punishment
- Some Christians are against the death penalty for such reasons as it goes against the commandment 'Do not kill', and there is a risk the wrong person is killed
- Some Christians are for the death penalty because the Church allows it and the Old Testament argues for it

# WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS FORGIVE?

## The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

In Matthew 18:21-22, the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me?' 'Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.' By saying this, Jesus made it clear that there was no limit to forgiveness.

There is no limit to forgiveness

## The Parable of the Prodigal Son

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is one of Jesus' best known stories where the father forgives his son and welcomes him back even though he had done wrong.

The father in the story forgives his son, even though he had done wrong.

## Forgiveness Versus Punishment

Some people might think that because Christians believe in forgiveness, they don't believe in punishment. However, as well as teaching about forgiveness Jesus also spoke about justice. He spoke about God's punishment for wrong-doers in the next life. On Judgement Day, God will judge all humans according to how they have behaved. If they have behaved justly they will be rewarded in heaven. It is up to God to judge people and he will forgive those who are truly sorry for what they have done and want to change. Many Christians believe that punishment and forgiveness can go together. Many Christians would see the main role of punishment as being to help the person involved to reform. Christians also need to look at the motives and reasons for crime. Christians should be actively involved in trying to create a better and fairer society where people don't feel the need to turn to crime.

Christians believe that forgiveness and punishment can go together but that reform should be the main aim of punishment.

Forgiveness is at the heart of the Gospel message. Jesus' example and teaching shows Christians that they should treat others with love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness.



## Forgiveness



**Justice:**  
Fairness in the way people are treated.

## Stephen Lawrence

Telegraph Article: 15th April 2018

'The father of murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence has made the humbling decision to forgive his son's killers, nearly 25 years after losing his first child.

Neville Lawrence, 76, said the decision was the hardest he has ever made, and that he struggles to put into words the devastation caused to his family when his son was killed.

Stephen was murdered by a gang of racists in Eltham, south-east London, on April 22 1993 at the age of 18.

His father said: **"The fact that I had to lose my first child has been devastating. I can't begin to explain the pain and the anguish me and my family have suffered over the past 25 years."**

He said the decision to forgive Stephen's killers **"will be the hardest I will ever make in my lifetime"**, but that he is embracing Christian faith. He plans to spend the 25th anniversary of his son's death in church.'

## John's Gospel: Chapter 8

There are many other examples from Jesus' life for Christians to follow. For example, Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) telling her to 'go and sin no more'.

Jesus' example shows us we should forgive adulterers.

## Matthew's Gospel: Chapter 6

'For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.**'  
(Matthew 6:14-15)

God will not forgive us if we do not forgive the sins of others first



Stephen Lawrence was stabbed to death waiting for a bus in 1993 in London. It was a racist attack by a gang he did not know. The police were also accused of being racist for not doing enough to catch the killers. Five men were arrested but were never convicted.

## The Lord's Prayer ('Our Father...')

The importance of forgiveness is emphasised in the Lord's Prayer. Christians ask God to 'forgive their sins, as they forgive those who have sinned against them'. This implies that Christians are not open to God's mercy if they are not forgiving towards others.

If we do not forgive others, we are not open to the mercy of God

## The Last Moments of Jesus' life

Jesus showed forgiveness in the last moments of his life as he was being put to death. While he was on the cross he said, 'Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.'

Jesus asks God to forgive others even while experiencing deep suffering on the cross.

## Knowledge Check

1. What do we learn from the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant?
2. What is the name of the parable where the father forgives his son?
3. What does Jesus tell the adulterer in John's Gospel?
4. What do we learn about forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer (Our Father)?
5. What does Jesus ask his Father to do whilst he is dying on the cross?
6. What is the definition of justice?
7. How was Stephen Lawrence murdered?
8. Why were the police accused of racism in this case?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

c) Explain the importance of forgiveness in Christianity (8 Marks)



## Arguments For Capital Punishment



Some Christians believe the death penalty is acceptable. They believe that because:

- Jesus never taught the death penalty was wrong
- The Old Testament teaches that the death penalty should be used for some crimes:

**"He who sheds a person's blood, shall have the blood shed, for in the image of God humans were made."**

**Genesis 9:5**

**"Life for life, eye for an eye." Exodus 21:24**

- Some Christians would argue that the death penalty upholds the commandment "thou shalt not kill" by showing the seriousness of murder as a crime
- St Paul teaches that Christians should accept and obey the laws of their country, which might include the death penalty.
- The Catholic Church has not cancelled its statement that capital punishment can be used by the state
- Religious and non-religious people might argue that some crimes are so dreadful that the most extreme form of punishment is justified. They might also argue that it is wrong to spend money on keeping someone in prison long term, when that money is needed by others in society

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT CP



Capital punishment, or the death penalty, is punishment that takes the life of the criminal. Some people think it is a good form of punishment because it deters people from murdering others and takes a life for a life. Other people disagree with capital punishment because evidence shows it does not deter, and innocent people can be killed for crimes they did not commit.

## Arguments Against Capital Punishment



Many Christians believe that capital punishment is un-Christian. They believe this because:

- Jesus came to save (reform) sinners, but you cannot reform a dead person
- The commandment says, **'Do not kill'**
- Jesus said that revenge is wrong:  
**'You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.'** – Matthew 5:38
- Christianity teaches that all life is sacred and that humans are made in God's image. If abortion and euthanasia are wrong, then so is capital punishment. Only God has the right to give and take away life
- The overall message of Christianity is love and forgiveness, so capital punishment goes against this
- Religious and non-religious people might say that there is always a risk that the wrong person might be executed and that killing a murderer is still killing and 'two wrongs don't make a right'
- Christians would agree with humanists that we should value the lives of all, human rights are important, and that governments should defend all their people. Therefore, killing as a punishment is wrong.

## Knowledge Check



1. What is Capital Punishment?
2. What biblical quote might Christians cite in support of Capital Punishment (CP)?
3. What arguments do Christians give in support of CP? (Give three examples)
4. What biblical quote might Christians cite against CP?
5. What arguments do Christians give against CP? (Give three examples)
6. What is Pope Francis' view on CP?
7. What did St Pope John Paul II say about CP in Evangelium Vitae 56? (summarise)
8. What was St Augustine's view on CP? (summarise)

## Choose a Task



1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

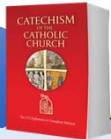
## Exam Question



*c) Explain different Christian attitudes to Capital Punishment (8 Marks)*

## Catholic Teaching on Capital Punishment

### The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)



The Catholic position on capital punishment has developed over many years. Traditionally the Catholic Church has allowed, but not encouraged capital punishment.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: **'Assuming that the guilty party's identity and responsibility have been fully determined, the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty.'** CCC 2267

### Pope Francis: completely against CP!



In recent years Pope Francis has stated that he is against the death penalty, saying that it is no longer justifiable and there is also the possibility that the wrong person could be killed.

### St Pope John Paul II: Evangelium Vitae 56



Pope St John Paul II in his Evangelium Vitae 56, suggested that capital punishment should be avoided unless it is the only way to defend society from the offender. This is the position set on in the new Catechism of the Catholic Church:

**'If bloodless means are sufficient to defend human lives against an aggressor and to protect public order and the safety of persons, public authority must limit itself to such means, because they better correspond to the concrete conditions of the common good and are more in conformity to the dignity of the human person.'**

### St Augustine's Letters



In two famous letters, St Augustine emphasises the need to seek other punishments if at all possible.

**'... we pity the person, but hate the offence or transgression. In fact, the more we dislike the vice in question, the less do we want the offender to die without correcting his vices... There is no space to reform character except in this life. After that, each person will have whatever he has won for himself here [in this life]. That is why we are forced to intercede for the guilty, out of love for the human race. For otherwise [capital] punishment will end this life for them, and once it is ended, they will not be able to bring their punishment to an end.'**

– Letter 153 to Macedonius, 3

**'...we would prefer to have them set free than to have the sufferings of our brothers avenged by shedding their blood.'**

– Letter 134 to Apringius, 4



## What is 'salvation'?

In Christianity, salvation means *being freed from sin and its consequences*.

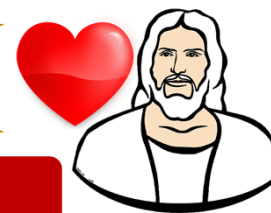
Christians believe that human sinfulness means that they had rejected God and no longer had a perfect relationship with him.

However, God loves humans and so provided a way for human sins to be 'paid for' so that the relationship between humans and God could be repaired and humans can hope to spend eternity with God after death.

Christians believe that the way God did this was to become human, as Jesus, and then to die on the cross.

Christians believe that by sacrificing his life Jesus paid the price for human sin once and for all.

# SALVATION



**SORRY!**

## What do humans need to achieve salvation?

Christianity teaches that Christians can only achieve salvation by repenting their sins, asking God for forgiveness, and accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God and savior of all humankind.

## Grace

For Christians, grace is the love and mercy shown by God because God wants them to have it, not because they have done anything to deserve or earn it.

It is a free, generous and undeserved gift from God. If Christians repent of their sins, they are truly sorry for them. Catholics believe that this makes them children of God and gives them the desire to change and do good.

Grace comes about in a special way in the sacraments, which Catholics believe are an encounter with God. Salvation brought by Jesus comes to the world today through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist. As a result of receiving these sacraments, Catholics should try harder to live a Christian life. All Christians are called to a life of holiness, so they should try to live up to the teachings of Jesus.

## The importance of grace, free will and salvation for Catholics

Salvation from sin is important because without it, a person sin will stop them from having a relationship with God and ultimately might mean hell or purgatory after death. The salvation of humankind was the purpose of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Jesus is the saviour of the world for Christians. Christians believe they do not deserve this but are given it freely by God. It is up to humans how they respond. God created humans with free will. They can choose to accept what Jesus has done or reject it. God wants everyone to have a relationship with him, but it cannot be forced.

Salvation is important for Catholics because it explains why the sacraments of baptism, reconciliation, confirmation healing and the Eucharist are at the heart of Catholic life.



## How did Jesus' death bring salvation?

Christians use a range of ways to describe how Jesus' death and resurrection reconciled (reconcile means to forgive and restore relationships) God and humans. The most common is the idea of a sacrifice. In the Old Testament animal sacrifice was common practice. People sacrificed an animal, often a lamb, as an offering to God. The person making the sacrifice hoped to mend their relationship with God. However, they had to make frequent sacrifices as they continued to sin.

John the Baptist describes Jesus as '*the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world*' (John 1:29) This means that just as people had sacrificed a lamb, Jesus, death was a sacrifice to make up for human sin. But because Jesus was divine (meaning 'perfect or God like'), perfect and without sin his sacrifice restored the human relationship with God for all times, unlike the animal sacrifices.

So by sacrificing his life, Jesus 'paid the price' for human sin. Human beings could not do this for themselves, as they were sinners. He earned salvation by suffering this punishment on behalf of all human beings. Christians believe that, in turn, Jesus extends the salvation he earned to all those who believe in him. So Jesus is the savior of the world.



**"Lamb of God"**

## Knowledge Check

1. Define the term *salvation*
2. What do humans need to achieve salvation?
3. What do Christians believe is a consequence of human sinfulness?
4. Why do Christians believe Jesus died for them?
5. Why is Jesus known as the "Lamb of God"? Where does the idea of the lamb as a sacrifice come from?
6. What is Jesus described as in John 1:29?
7. Define the term *grace*
8. What are the seven sacraments?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

- b) Describe Catholic teaching on belief in God's grace [5]  
b) Describe Christian belief in salvation [5]



# THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

The last few days of Jesus' life, death and resurrection and ascension

The Paschal mystery is one of the central concepts of Christian faith. It relates to the last few days of Jesus' life, his death and the events after his death. Christians believe that Jesus was resurrected and that he was then taken from earth to be with God in an event known as the Ascension. They believe that dying and rising from the dead was the work God the Father sent his Son to do on earth. They believe this is how Jesus offers salvation to all. The last few days of Jesus' life are remembered during Holy Week, the week running up to Easter Sunday. The suffering that Jesus went through at this time is traditionally called the Passion (from a Latin word meaning 'suffering').

## Start

### 1. The Last Supper

The Last Supper was the meal that Jesus had with his disciples on the evening before he was arrested. The events of the Last Supper are remembered on Maundy Thursday, which takes place on the Thursday of Holy Week. At the Last Supper, Jesus reassured his disciples that, after he had left the earth, the Holy Spirit would be sent to them to help keep his message and teaching alive. Jesus gave his disciples two symbols, in the form of bread and wine, to be used in remembrance of him. The bread represented Jesus's body, which was to be sacrificed on behalf of all human beings, and the wine his blood.

Today, the symbols of bread and wine are an important part of Christian worship in a ceremony known as the Eucharist (or Mass, as Catholics call it).



### 2. Jesus' arrest in the garden of Gethsemane

The Gospels record that after the Last Supper Jesus went with his disciples to a garden called Gethsemane, where he prayed. This was a time of great sorrow and torment for him, because he knew that he would die. Christians refer to the hours Jesus spent at Gethsemane as the 'agony in the garden'. He was arrested there after one of his disciples Judas told the authorities where to find him.



### 3. Jesus is tried and found guilty

Jesus was tried by the Sanhedrin (the Jewish religious leaders and authorities). He was found guilty of blasphemy, the crime of either insulting God or pretending to be God. The punishment for blasphemy was death. Although the Sanhedrin found Jesus guilty some scholars today argue that it was the Romans who hurried Jesus to his death, because they wanted to nip in the bud any unrest.



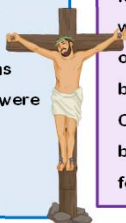
### 4. Pontius Pilate

Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor in charge of the city of Jerusalem, sentenced Jesus to be whipped and crucified. Roman soldiers then mocked and beat Jesus before leading him away to be crucified. As regards who was responsible, the Catholic Church teaches that it was the sins of all humankind that brought Jesus to the cross.



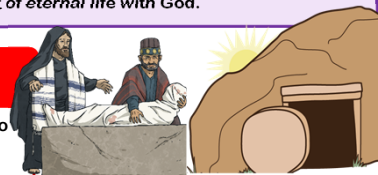
### 5. Good Friday Jesus is crucified

Christians commemorate Jesus' crucifixion and death on Good Friday, the Friday of Holy Week and treat it as a day of mourning for his death. However, Christians believe that Jesus' death ultimately had good consequences for humankind. Christians believe that Jesus' suffering and death were part of God's plan, which can only be understood within the context of Jesus' resurrection after his death.



### 6. The Resurrection and its significance for Christians

The Gospels record that after Jesus died on the cross, his body was buried, but he rose from the dead three days later. This event is known as the Resurrection. It is the central belief of Christianity and lies at the heart of the Christian faith. The reason for its importance is that Catholics believe Jesus's ability to overcome death proved he was the Son of God and had a divine nature. It confirms their belief in the Trinity and omnipotent (all-powerful) God who holds ultimate power over the universe he created, because only the creator of life could resurrect life after death. Catholics also think the Resurrection demonstrates that Jesus is their Saviour. They believe he has the power to help anyone who believes in him to overcome death. By forgiving their sins Jesus can grant them the gift of *eternal life* with God.



### 7. The Ascension and the promise of the Holy Spirit

The Gospels tell how Jesus was taken up into heaven 40 days after his resurrection, as witnessed by his disciples. This is known as the 'Ascension'. The significance of the Ascension for Christians is that is the end of Jesus' time on earth. Catholics believe this means his mission, or reason for being on the Earth, was successful. He had completed everything God the Father had intended him to do and could, therefore, return to heaven to prepare a place for his followers. Catholics also believe that Jesus' Ascension opened the way for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to energise and encourage Christians everywhere, as Jesus had promised at the Last Supper.



### 8. Hell and the consequence of a loving God

Some people might ask the question 'surely a loving God would want to save everyone. He would not want to condemn anyone to hell?' God does not send anyone to hell. Humans have free will and will choose how to spend their life. If a person chooses to do evil then they will be far from God no matter how much God wants them to come to him. God's love is unconditional and universal but he cannot force it upon us, we have to accept it. Hell is not a punishment, but a consequence of choosing to go against God. We choose our eternal destination by our choices in life. The concept of free will means that God can only offer salvation; it is up to the individual to accept that offer.



## Knowledge Check



1. What is the suffering Jesus went through in the last few days of his life traditionally known as?
2. When are the events of the Last Supper remembered?
3. The symbols of bread and wine are an important part of Christian worship. What is this ceremony known as?
4. Where was Jesus arrested?
5. What was Jesus found guilty of?
6. Who does the Catholic Church teach are responsible for Jesus' death?
7. What did Jesus' resurrection prove?
8. Jesus was taken up to heaven 40 days after his resurrection. What is this known as?



## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question



b) Describe Catholic teaching on the role of the Paschal Mystery in achieving salvation [5]

c) Explain the importance of belief in the Paschal Mystery [8]

## Summary

- Humans have rejected God by their sinfulness, but Jesus offers salvation and redemption.
- Christians believe that their relationship with God, and their salvation, depends on Jesus's life, death, resurrection and ascension.
- This is a freely given gift offered through God's grace and cannot be earned.
- God is all-loving and merciful but it is human free will but chooses to reject God which leads to hell.

# THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

## Knowledge Check

1. What are the 'four marks' of the Church?
2. When is the Nicene Creed recited?
3. Who do Catholics believe is the source of all holiness?
4. How does the Church make people holy?
5. Define the term *Catholic*
6. Define the term *evangelising*
7. What does it mean that the Church is apostolic?
8. What is the Greek word for Church?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
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### CHALLENGE!

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## Exam Question

c) Explain the importance of belief in the four marks of the Church [8]

### The Nicene Creed

At the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople in the fourth century CE, Church leaders agreed upon a single statement of faith called the Nicene Creed. It identifies four marks, or distinguishing qualities, of the Church. The 'four marks' of the Church are that it is one, holy, catholic and apostolic.



## The Nicene Creed

Catholics recite this every Sunday. A creed is a statement of belief. A council of bishops met in a place called Nicea, in Turkey, to settle the question of how Christians should speak about God. In this creed it is clear that Christians believe in:

- ✓ One God
- ✓ But also in the 'Son of God' who is equal with the Father
- ✓ And in the Holy Spirit who is 'adored and glorified' with the Father and the Son
- ✓ One, holy, catholic and apostolic Church
- ✓ Forgiveness and Resurrection

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

God the Father

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.

God the Son

I believe in the Holy Spirit, The Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

God the Holy Spirit

*I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.* I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.



One, holy, catholic & apostolic Church

*"...one, holy, catholic and apostolic"*

The four marks of the Church (The Nicene Creed)

One

The Catechism notes that the Church is one for three reasons:

- because of its source, which is the Holy Trinity, a perfect unity of three divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- because of its founder, Jesus Christ, who came to reconcile and unite all humankind through his death on the cross, taking away their sins.
- because of its soul, the Holy Spirit, who lives in the souls of Catholics and unites them into one group or 'communion' of believers, and who guides the church.

Catholics are united in their beliefs, the prayer which sums up what Catholics believe, the other teachings and the celebration of the sacraments. For example, wherever you go to Mass in the world, the Mass is always the same.

'One' doesn't mean that everything should be exactly the same everywhere you go. In the Church's oneness, there is diversity: there is room for many different types of people who work together to continue the mission of Jesus. The Catholic Church teaches that these various cultures and traditions enrich the church in the different expressions of the one faith.

Holy

Catholics believe Jesus is the source of all holiness. Jesus makes the Church holy and the Church makes people holy through its teaching, prayer, worship and good works. Catholics believe that each member of the Church has been called to holiness. This means that through baptism, a Catholic has been freed from original sin, filled with God's grace, and become a member of the holy People of God.

'Holy' doesn't mean that there are no sinners in the Church. Catholics recognise that they are weak human beings, and at times they sin and fall short of what God wants them to be. They are taught to ask for God's forgiveness and try again. In a sense, the Church considers itself to be a Church of sinners, rather than of the self-righteous. One of the prayers of the Mass asks:

**"Lord, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church."**

UNIVERSAL

Catholic

Saint Ignatius of Antioch (c.35-108CE) used this word, meaning 'universal' or 'whole', to describe the Church. The Church is Catholic in that Christ is universally present (present everywhere) in the Church, and because he has given the Church the task of 'evangelising' which means telling the whole world the message of Jesus. The Church is Catholic because Jesus gives the Church everything they need to be saved.



Apostolic

Catholics believe that Jesus Christ founded the Church and gave his authority to his apostles – these were the 12 men he called to follow him. He entrusted a special authority to St Peter, the leader of the Apostles, to act as his representation on earth. Peter was the first pope. The Church is apostolic means that the faith that Catholics have has been handed down from the first apostles, through the pope and bishops right up to the present day.



Church

In Greek, 'ecclesia' is the word for Church. It means assembly, or gathering together of God's people. The Church *is* the people of God gathered together. The word *church* with a small c is used to refer to building where Christians come to pray. When it is written with a capital C, Catholics mean everyone who is a member of the Church, all believers together. The Church is an important idea to Catholics.



# MARY AS A MODEL OF THE CHURCH

Mary is a model of the Church. This means that during her life she modelled what it means to be Catholic:



## Other Names:

Our Lady  
Ave Maria (Holy Mary)  
Mother of God  
Mother of the Church  
Blessed Mother  
Blessed Virgin  
Immaculate Mary



## Faith

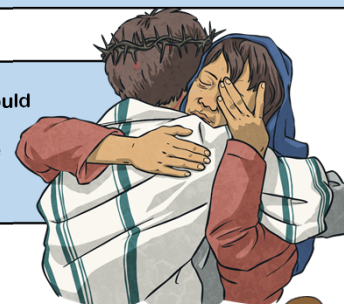
Mary had total faith in God and in her son. She did not question God when she was told that she would have a child, even though she was a virgin. At the very end she did not desert her son, but was one of the few of his followers to follow him right up to the foot of the cross.

## Charity

Mary is also a model of charity. She gave her whole life to God and showed kindness and compassion. This is how Christian should be too. At the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1-11) she asks her son to help, knowing that he would do what was needed. The celebration had run out of wine, but Mary knew that Jesus had the power to help. As a result of Mary's request Jesus performed his first miracle and turned water into wine. This is also an example of how Jesus listens to his mother and fulfils her request. This is one of the reasons why Catholics pray to Mary, because they believe she will pray to Jesus for them and he will listen.

## Discipleship

Catholics believe that Mary was the greatest example of discipleship. She spent her whole life dedicated to Jesus. When Mary was told by the angel that she was to be the mother of the Christ, she accepted willingly and joyfully. This makes her a role model and a guide to the way Christian should serve God.



## Why is Mary special to Catholics today?

Catholics hold Mary in great honour. She was chosen to be the human mother of Jesus Christ, and you will often hear her described as Mary, Mother of God. So Mary is really important in the work of salvation. Without Mary, there would be no Jesus, no incarnation and, therefore, no salvation.

Mary is often called 'Our Lady' by Catholics. This is a special title given to no one else, showing how special she is. All Catholic churches will have a statue of Mary and there is a special devotion to her.

As Mary had such a special relationship with God, Catholics believe that she acts as a mediator between them and God. Catholics pray to Mary, but not in the way they pray to God. They do not believe that she can answer prayers in the way God can, but they believe that she will pray to God on their behalf. This is known as interceding. Catholics might light a special candle called a votive candle and place it on a special stand by the statue in church as a symbol of their prayer. Most Catholic churches will have a statue of Mary showing her importance.

## Knowledge Check



1. Mary is sometimes known as a 'model of the Church'. What does this mean?
2. What other names are attributed to Mary?
3. Why is Mary believed to be the greatest example of discipleship?
4. How did Mary demonstrate her faith in God?
5. In what way is Mary a model of charity?
6. What happened at the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1-11)?
7. Why is Mary special to Catholics today?
8. Catholics believe that Mary *intercedes* for them. What does this mean?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
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### CHALLENGE!

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## Exam Question

c) Explain why Mary is important for Catholics (8 Marks)

# THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST

This topic links with baptism

The Church is described as the body of Christ in both the New Testament and the Catechism. According to the Bible, when Jesus entered the world, **he took on a physical body that was 'prepared' for him** (Hebrews 10:5; Philippians 2:7). This is known as the incarnation; God became a human being.

While on earth in his physical body Jesus showed God's love in the things he said and did. He taught people how God wanted them to live and he cared for the sick and the infirm by curing them. Ultimately, he gave his life as a sacrifice so that all Christians could have a closer relationship with God. After he rose from the dead, Christians believe that he physically (bodily) ascended (went up) into heaven. This is known as the Ascension.

The teaching that the Church is the body of Christ means that Catholics believe that the work of Christ on earth did not end with the Ascension. They believe that **Jesus lives on through his followers, and in the Church**. In this way, it is believed that Christ continues his work in the world and shows the love of God through members of the Church. In this way, the Church functions as 'the body of Christ'. The Church is not a club or association to belong to; it isn't just a gathering of like-minded people. It continues the work that Jesus started off making the world holy. **The Church offers a way of continuing what Jesus started.**

So, according to Catholic teaching, all Christians continue the work of Jesus on earth. Christian people are now the physical body of Jesus as he is no longer physically present in the world. **When someone is baptised, Catholics believe that they are united with other Christians and with Christ and become part of this 'body'.**



## "Outside the Church there is no salvation"

The phrase 'outside the Church there is no salvation' is a very old one and comes from the writings of early Christian thinkers. For example, it occurs in one of the letters of St Cyprian, a Catholic bishop in Africa in the third century. For St Cyprian, and many others since, this phrase has expressed *the belief that only Catholics will go to heaven*. This is the most straightforward reading of the meaning of this phrase which can still be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church today (CCC 845). But does the Church teach that anyone who is not a Catholic is going to hell? **The Church does not teach this**; but what it does teach needs to be looked at carefully.

## So, what does the Church teach about salvation?

Firstly, the Church teaches that everyone is saved through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection – whether they know it or not. The way you can be most certain of receiving salvation is to be a baptised and practising member of the Catholic Church. This is stated in the Catechism:

**Jesus 'explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and Baptism, and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door', therefore, 'they could not be saved who, knowing the the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it or to remain in it' – (CCC 846, citing LG 16)**

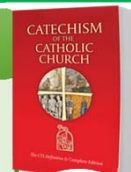
However, they also teach that the Church of Christ is wider than the Catholic Church. Catholics believe that the full way to get to God is through the Catholic faith. However, God is bigger than the Church, so people who are not Catholics can be saved by God's power.

Secondly, they also teach that people who have not heard the Gospel of Jesus but have lived good lives can be saved because it is not their fault that they are not Christians. They are sometimes referred to as 'anonymous Christians'. This is because Catholics believe these people are living good lives. So the Church also believes that people who are not Christians can also be saved:

**'Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience – those too may achieve eternal salvation.' (LG 16 cited CCC 847).**

The Catholic Church still believes that the most certain route to salvation is to be a baptised and practising member of the Catholic Church, but it does believe that other good people outside of the Church can be saved.

Everyone is saved through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection!



Baptism

God is bigger than the Church

Anonymous Christians



## Summary

- The Church is the people of God
- The Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic
- Mary is a model of the Church as an example of discipleship, faith and charity
- The Church is known as 'the body of Christ' and 'people of God'
- There are multiple meanings of the phrase 'outside of the Church there is no salvation'.

## Knowledge Check

1. How did Jesus show God's love?
2. What does it mean to say: 'the church is the body of Christ'?
3. Which Catholic saint in particular describes the Church as 'the body of Christ'?
4. Catholics believe that Christ is fully present in the Eucharist. What is this known as?
5. What do Anglican Christians believe about the bread and wine?
6. Which saint wrote in his letters that 'outside the Church there is no salvation'?
7. How can Christians be certain of receiving salvation?
8. How do Catholics believe non-Christians can be saved?

## Choose a Task

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2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

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## Exam Question

**C) Explain the significance in understanding the Church as the body of Christ [8]**

## Why is the Church as the body of Christ important for Catholics?

In the New Testament, the Church is described as 'the body of Christ' especially by St Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:27). As Catholics consider themselves to be the physical form of Jesus on earth (the body of Christ), they must continue with his physical work, giving help and teaching. For Catholics, this means that Jesus is still active in the world. His work didn't end with his death, but it continues in those that follow and believe in him.

Following this teaching, individual Catholics can continue Jesus' work in different ways and yet be united. Each person, just like each part of a body, has a different function and is used for the good of the whole body. The Church remains a unity because its entire people are working together as the body of Christ.

It is for this reason that the Mass (or Eucharist) is so important for Catholics. It is central to their faith that the bread and wine which have been offered up in prayer have now become the body and blood of Christ. As they share these in communion, Catholics believe that they are given strength to be the followers of Christ in the world. The also reaffirms their unity and gives them a sense of identity.

Some Christians, for example Anglicans, believe that the bread and wine just symbolise Jesus' body and blood. However Catholics believe that Christ is fully present in the Eucharist. This is known as the Real Presence. This means that at Mass the bread and wine, while keeping the appearance of bread and wine, are actually transformed into the body, blood, soul and dignity of Christ.



# FEATURES OF A CATHOLIC CHURCH

## A place of worship

A Catholic church is the place of worship where Catholics gather as a community to celebrate their faith. Most Catholics will attend a local parish church. A parish is the local Christian community around a church building. They are usually looked after by a priest, who leads the community and celebrates the sacraments. Christians call their church 'the house of God'. Many Christians believe that the community of believers (the Church) is more important than the church building, which is simply a meeting place for the Church.

## Inside a Catholic Church

The interior of Roman Catholic churches can vary from very plain and simple to fancy and ornate, but whatever the design, the whole church will be focused on the sanctuary. Sanctuary means 'holy place'. This is where the altar, lectern and tabernacle are. The sanctuary is the centre of public worship. These are features you would expect to find in a Catholic church:



## The Confessional

This is a small room or box-like structure in which the Sacrament of Reconciliation takes place. This is when Catholics confess their sins to a priest. Inside the confessional there is a screen so that the person confessing their sins (the penitent) can make their confession anonymously. The priest sits on one side while the penitent kneels in the other. When penitents confess their sins, the priest gives them a penance. A penance is something that penitents have to do, for example say a prayer. The priest then absolves them. They are given the assurance that by the power of God they have been forgiven their sins through the priest. By penance and absolution they are reconciled to God, which means that their relationship with God is restored. The fact that there is a room dedicated to it shows how important the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to Catholics.

## The Altar

A table, usually made out of stone. The main part of the Mass, the liturgy of the Eucharist, takes place at the altar. Mass is one of the most important sacraments for Catholics and during the liturgy of the Eucharist, the priest consecrates (blesses) bread and wine at the altar and then the congregation comes to the altar to receive them. The altar reminds Christians of the sacrifice and death of Jesus on the cross and that Jesus offers salvation and redemption from sin. The fact that the altar is also a table, reminds Catholics that they are sharing in a meal, in the same way Jesus shared a meal with his disciples at the Last Supper. On or nearby the altar are candles, representing the Christian belief that Jesus is the light of the world.

## The baptismal font

This is a big basin, sometimes made of stone, filled with holy water where baptisms are performed. Baptism is the sacrament by which a person becomes a Christian; it is the first sacrament to be received. Fonts were traditionally positioned by the main door to the church to symbolise that people entered the Christian life through baptism. Now the font tends to be at the front so that all those present can easily see about it and when it takes place. Jesus himself was baptised by John the Baptist and baptism was one of the very earliest Christian practices, following Jesus's final command to: *'go and make disciples of all nations... Baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'* Matthew 28: 19.

## The lectern

Near the altar is the lectern, or it is sometimes called an ambo, used for the Liturgy of the Word. The lectern is a book stand where the priest, deacon or reader stands to read to the congregation; they read from a lectionary, which is the book containing a collection of scripture readings for use on a given day. Catholics believe that at Mass there are spiritually nourished and fed by listening to the word of God.

## The crucifix

In Catholic churches there is always a crucifix – a cross with an image of the crucified Christ on it. It is usually on or near the altar. It serves as a reminder of the suffering and death of Jesus. Catholics believe that the death of Jesus was the price he paid for their salvation. Catholics, like all Christians, believe that Jesus died for them to pay for their sins and so that they could have eternal life.

## The Tabernacle

The tabernacle is a safe-like box in which the consecrated (blessed) hosts are kept. The hosts are put in the tabernacle after Mass so that communion can be taken to the sick and those who are unable to come to church. The tabernacle is also a focus for private prayer and devotion. Catholics will genuflect (go down on one knee) towards the tabernacle in honour of the presence of Jesus in the form of the blessed bread and wine. The tabernacle is often behind the altar, but in some modern churches it is sometimes placed in a side chapel so that people can pray in private. A sanctuary lamp (a small lamp showing that the Blessed Sacrament is present) is found nearby, which reminds Catholics of the presence of God in the tabernacle.

## Other features

- ✓ As people come into to the church they pass a **holy water container or stoup**. Catholics dip their fingers in the water and make the sign of the cross beginning on their head, down to their torso and then to their left and right shoulder. This reminds them of the Trinity, the death of Jesus and their own baptism. It also helps to focus their mind into a respectful attitude as they enter the church.
- ✓ Featuring importantly in a Roman Catholic church are the **Stations of the Cross**. These are usually pictures or carvings of each of the 14 stages of Christ's passion (trials, death and resurrection). They are especially used in Lent to focus worship on the death of Jesus.
- ✓ **Statues** are usually found around the church to help people pray. One of them will usually be of our Lady (Mary - Jesus' mother).
- ✓ In front of the statues there will probably be **votive candles**, which are small candles symbolising prayers. The statues are not worshipped in any way, they are just used to focus the mind and as aids to prayer.

## Knowledge Check

1. What is a parish?
2. What is the difference between Church/ church?
3. What is a confessional?
4. What takes place at the altar?
5. What command Jesus gave does baptism follow?
6. What is a lectern?
7. What is a tabernacle?
8. What other features are there inside a church and how are they used?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
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### CHALLENGE!

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## Exam Question

- c) Explain the features and symbolism found within a Catholic church [8]  
c) Explain how the altar and font represent Catholic beliefs about Salvation [8]

## Summary

- A Catholic church is the place of worship where Catholics gather as a community to celebrate their faith
- The focal point of a Roman Catholic Church is the sanctuary. You will find the altar and lectern here. The altar is the stone table at which the liturgy of the Eucharist takes place
- The font is a wooden or stone basin, filled with holy water where baptism takes place
- Other features of the building are the confessional, the stoup and the tabernacle
- Stations of the Cross and statues are there as aids to prayer
- Some churches have towers or steeples which are symbolic of prayer rising up to God
- Traditionally, churches face towards the east and are built in a cruciform shape

## Cruciform

It is common for churches to be cruciform in shape. This means that they are in the shape of a cross. This is to signify the importance of the death of Jesus.



## Towers/ Steeples

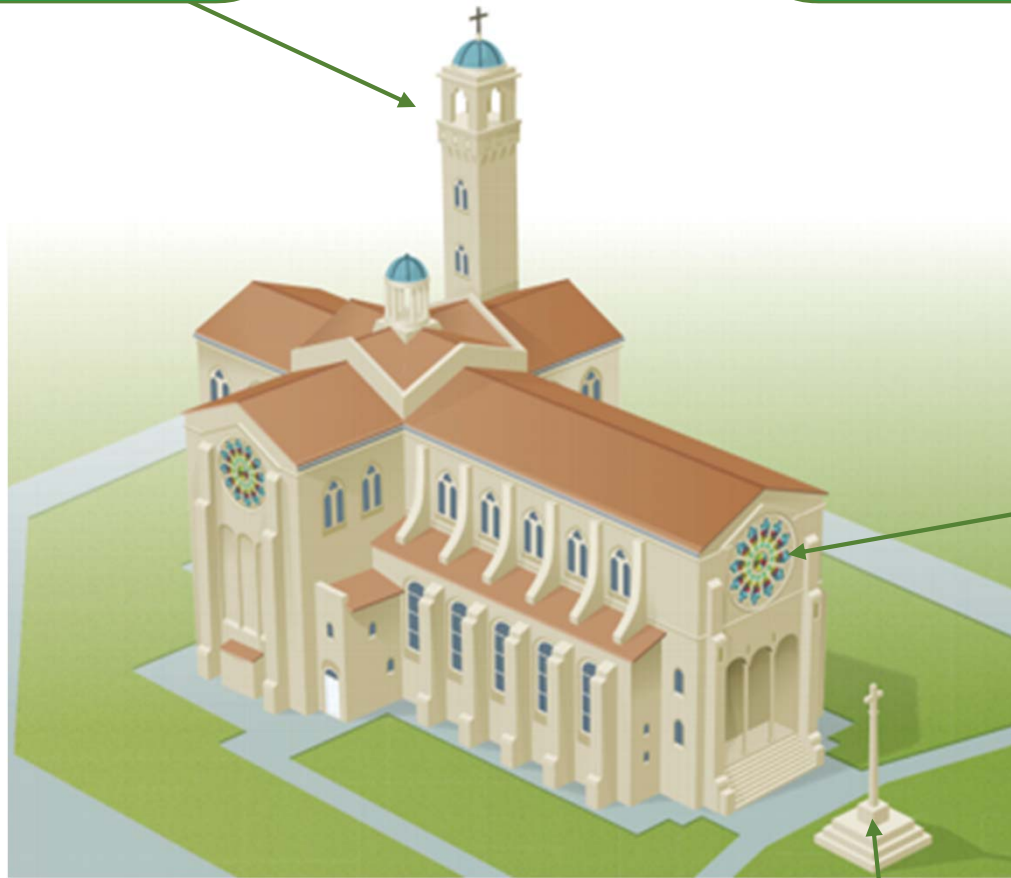
Some churches have towers, others have steeples. The tower or steeple can be seen from long distances away. This helps the church to stand out from other buildings as something special. Towers and steeples represent prayer and worship rising up to heaven, a physical representation of what takes place inside the building. Many towers have bells that are rung to call people to worship.

## Vatican II

Modern church buildings tend to be simpler than those that were built a long time ago. As a result of Vatican II and the changes it made to worship, some churches built since the 1960s are radically different from those that were built before.

For example, some churches are circular in design with the altar in the middle. This signifies the oneness of the worshippers and that they are all sharing in the sacrificial meal at the altar. It can also stand for the eternity of God.

# THE ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF A CATHOLIC CHURCH



## Facing towards the East (Jerusalem)

Traditionally, churches face toward the east. This tradition is based on historic practices. Following Jewish practices, the first Christians prayed facing the Holy Land, where Jesus was born, lived, died and rose again. Also the sun rises in the east and is a reminder of the resurrection of Jesus bringing new life.

## Christian symbols

Many churches have crosses or other Christian symbols to mark them out as Christian places of worship. It is not unusual for Catholic churches to have a recreation of the grotto at Lourdes, a site of Christian pilgrimage where a vision of Mary was seen in the nineteenth century. This shows how important Mary is.



## Stained glass windows

Very often stained-glass is used in churches. These windows usually display stories from the Bible or the lives of saints.



## Knowledge Check

1. What is the name of church that takes the form of a cross?
2. Why do modern church buildings tend to be much simpler?
3. Some churches are circular in design. What does this signify?
4. Why do churches traditionally face the east?
5. What do stained-glass windows typically depict?
6. Why are churches often tall with domes or vaulted ceilings?
7. Why do many churches have towers or steeples?
8. Some churches have a recreation of the grotto at Lourdes. Why is this?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

## CHALLENGE!

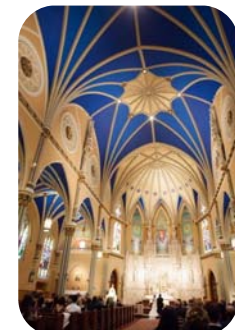
Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

c) Explain how the architecture of Catholic churches helps Catholics reflect on the mystery of salvation [8]

## Domes/ Vaulted Ceilings

Churches are often very tall with domes or vaulted ceilings. This creates a space which is pointing up, showing a connection with God and heaven.





# The Seven Sacraments

The seven sacraments lay the foundation of every Christian life. Most Christians believe there are two sacraments. These are known as the 'Dominical Sacraments' as they are based on the actions of Jesus.

The first of these is baptism, which was inspired by Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist and his command to his disciples to go out and baptise others.

The second is the Eucharist (also known as Holy Communion). This is a ceremony based around eating bread and drinking wine in memory of the Last Supper.

Some Christians, particularly Catholics and Orthodox Christians, believe there are five further sacraments (therefore seven sacraments in total). This is what you need to know for your exam. Some Christians do not believe in any sacraments. An example of this are *Quakers*. They believe that *all life is sacramental*, not just individual actions. They therefore try to act in a good manner in every part of their life.



## Sacraments of initiation

These lay the foundation of every Christian life.



For Catholics, baptism is the point at which they enter the Catholic Church. At the service of baptism, water is poured on a baby's head while the priest says: "*I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*"

The person being baptised becomes part of the family of God. Baptism takes away original sin (which all humans have inherited through the first sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) and gives a new birth in the Holy Spirit. The 'sign' through which they receive God's grace is the pouring of water.

Catholic families are encouraged to baptise their children soon after birth, however sometimes people are baptised later, or even as adults.

Baptism



Confirmation completes the sacrament of baptism. As most Catholics are baptised as babies, confirmation is done when they are older. The person confirms the promises made on their behalf by their parents/guardians when they were baptised and this is a sign that they are mature enough to make the decision to be a Christian on their own.

For Catholics confirmation gives them the strength to follow Jesus and to become involved in the mission he left to the Church. Its signs are the laying of hands on a person's head, most often by a bishop, and the anointing with oil.

Confirmation



At the Last Supper before Jesus' death, he and his disciples ate bread and wine. He told them that the bread was his body and the wine was his blood, which he would sacrifice when he was crucified. He asked his followers to re-enact the meal when they came together after his death. Now when Catholics come together at Mass they take bread and wine in memory of Jesus' sacrifice. Catholics believe that when the bread and wine are consecrated (blessed), although their appearance doesn't change, they are actually transformed into the body and blood of Jesus. By receiving his body and blood, they are nourished spiritually. The signs are the bread and wine.

Eucharist

## Sacraments of healing

These celebrate the healing power of Jesus.



By confessing and expressing sorrow for their sins, Catholics experience God's forgiveness and healing through absolution (forgiveness) by the priest. Their relationship with God and their unity as a Church is made whole again. The signs of this sacrament are the confession of sins and the priest's words of absolution.

Penance



This unites a sick person's suffering with that of Jesus and brings forgiveness of sins. The individual is anointed with oil (a symbol of strength) and receives the laying-on of hands from a priest. In the past, this sacrament was only given to those close to death, but more recently the Church has encouraged its use for illness which is not necessarily life-threatening. The signs are the anointing and the laying on of hands.

Anointing of the Sick

## Sacraments at the service of communion

These help individuals to serve the community and bring about the salvation of others



In matrimony, or marriage, a baptised man and woman are united. Matrimony needs the consent of the couple, as expressed in the marriage promises (vows). The couple and their wedding rings are the signs of this sacrament.

Matrimony



In holy orders, men are ordained as priests, deacons, or bishops. Priests serve as spiritual leaders of their communities, and deacons serve to remind us of our baptismal call to help others. Bishops carry on the teachings of Apostles. The signs of this sacraments are the laying on of hands\* and for a priest anointing with oil by a bishop.

Holy Orders

## Knowledge Check

Answer in full sentences or copy out the question.

- According to St Augustine, what is a sacrament?
- Why do Christians receive the sacraments?
- What are the dominical sacraments?
- Which type of Christians believe that 'all life is sacramental' and therefore do not accept the sacraments?
- Which Christians believe there are seven sacraments in total?
- Name each of the seven sacraments
- What is the purpose of the sacraments of initiation?
- What do the sacraments of healing celebrate?
- Which two sacraments help individuals to serve the community and bring about the salvation of others?
- What is meant by the term 'laying on of hands'?
- What is meant by the term 'anoint'?
- Which sacrament completes the sacrament of baptism?
- What is another term used for the sacrament of Holy Communion?
- Create a table outlining the signs of each sacrament

## Choose a Task

- Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
- Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
- Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Challenge

*"Baptism is the most important sacrament."*

Discuss the statement showing that you have thought of more than one point of view. (some might agree/disagree with this statement because...however I agree/disagree with this statement because...)

For each sentence, use PEEA (Point, Evidence, Explain, Analysis).  
For example:  
P – Make your point  
E – Back it up with evidence or examples  
E – Explanation (link back to the statement)  
A – Say what is good or bad about the point you have just made

St Augustine defined a sacrament as '*An outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace*'. Sacraments are therefore important actions that allow Christians to achieve God's blessing.

### Key Terms/Key Concepts

- Eucharist** – meaning 'thanksgiving'. The name Catholics use to describe the rite where the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus and are received by the people. Also the name for the Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Anoint** – to rub with oil
- Laying on of hands – A bishop or priest laying their hands on someone receiving a sacrament
- Ordained** – Made a member of the clergy (e.g. a priest).

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EUCHARIST FOR CATHOLICS

For Catholics, the most regularly celebrated sacrament is the Eucharist or the Mass. The Mass or Eucharist is the liturgical service where Catholics gather to remember the Last Supper, when Jesus took bread and wine and asked his disciples to remember him when they did the same. Sunday, the day of the Resurrection, is the most holy day. To attend Mass on Sunday and certain holy days is obligatory for all Catholics who are capable of doing so. Mass is celebrated every day except Good Friday and Easter Saturday.

**Eucharist:** Means 'thanksgiving'. The name Catholics use to describe the rite where the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus and is received by the people. Also the name for the Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.



By receiving the blood and wine in communion, Christ's body and blood spiritually sustain the believer. In the Eucharistic prayer, said by the priest to give thanks to God, the central part is the 'prayer of consecration', when the priest repeats Jesus' words at the Last Supper:

"This is my body... This is my blood..."

## Catholics believe that Christ is present in the Mass

- In the consecrated bread and wine, which are Jesus' body and blood
- In the readings (especially those from the Gospels)
- In the believers gathered together because Jesus said, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them'.
- In the person of the priest (Catholics believe that Christ works through the priest to transform the bread and wine into his body and blood).

The eucharist is said to be '*the source and summit of the Christian life*', because being unified with God is the most important thing to Catholics. It is at the heart of their spiritual life and they become closer to God because they receive Jesus' body and blood in communion.

Catholics believe that the bread and wine are transformed into Jesus' body and blood. The technical word for this is 'transubstantiation'.

Mass re-enacts the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, so it is the highest form of prayer that a believer can make

The eucharist makes individual Catholics part of the body of Christ (the Church)



## Sources of Wisdom and Authority

- ✓ The Last Supper
- ✓ "The source and summit of the Christian life"



## Knowledge Check



1. Define the key concept *eucharist*
2. What is the most regularly celebrated sacrament for Catholics?
3. What is the most holy day of the week for Christians?
4. On which two days in the year is mass *not* celebrated?
5. In what ways is Christ present in the Mass?
6. The eucharist is said to be "*the source and summit of the Christian life*". What does this mean?
7. Define the key term *transubstantiation*
8. What is the highest form of prayer that a believer can make?

## Choose a Task



1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

**CHALLENGE!**  
Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question



c) Explain the importance of the Eucharist for Catholic Christians [8]

## Sacraments Summary

- A sacrament is 'an outward sign of inward grace, ordained by God, by which grace is given to the soul'. There are seven sacraments.
- The sacramental nature of reality means that God can speak to us through the world.
- The Eucharist/Mass is at the heart of Catholic worship. It re-enacts the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and unites Catholics into the body of Christ.



# EVANGELISATION

Sources of Wisdom and Authority

"Go out and make disciples of all nations..."  
Matthew's Gospel  
Evangelii Gaudium - The Joy of the Gospels

## Why does the Church engage in evangelisation?

Catholics believe that Jesus brought salvation through his death and resurrection. In doing this, he atoned (made up for) the sins of humankind.

However, **to be 'saved', individuals have to have faith in Jesus and believe in his atoning death and his resurrection.**

The Catholic Church believes it has a **duty and an obligation to spread this faith** as Jesus told his disciples to do, so that as many people as possible can be saved.

Helping the poor and those in need is an important part of evangelisation as it puts Jesus' teachings about love and compassion into practice.

## How does the Church engage in evangelisation?



## Jesus gives his Apostles their mission

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives his Apostles their mission. **Mission means the calling to go out into the world and spread the Christian faith.** This mission is also the mission of the Church.

The mission of the Church is to go out into the world:

- To go out to the ends of the Earth
- To baptise people into the church
- To teach the teachings of Christ



The Church began in Jerusalem and within a few decades of the resurrection of Jesus it had spread through the Roman Empire. Soon it reached the centre of the empire, Rome itself.

**St Paul**, whose letters make up a large part of the section of the New Testament called the Epistles, was one of the first missionaries. From Rome, missionaries went to many parts of the empire. Many were persecuted or even killed for their beliefs.

**In the last 500 years, the Church has become truly worldwide.** Missionaries have gone from Europe and started churches in Africa, South America and in Asia.

*Going out to preach the gospel is known as evangelisation.*

In recent years the focus of evangelisation changed and the Church is no longer evangelising in places that have not heard the gospel before. Instead they are focusing on Western countries, like European countries, which are becoming increasingly secular – this means an increasing number of people are saying they don't have a religious faith.

## Knowledge Check



1. Define the key concept: *evangelism*
2. Define the key term: *mission*
3. What is the mission of the Church?
4. Where did the Church begin?
5. Which author of the Epistles was one of the first missionaries?
6. Why does the Church engage in evangelisation?
7. How has the Church's focus altered in recent years?
8. How does the Church engage in evangelisation?



## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.



## Exam Question

c) Explain the importance of evangelisation for Catholics [8]

## Locally

- This basic message of God's love is passed on by the Church, most importantly, through the whole life of the parish (celebration of the Mass, sacraments, Bible study, charitable work, social events, parish retreats, outreach events, etc.). Pope Francis talks a lot about the parish and says that the parish "possesses great flexibility", which means there are many ways they can spread God's message.
- Also the parish can engage with other organisations (other Christian churches, other faith communities, social workers and agencies) to work for justice, social cohesion and the common good, which is also part of evangelisation, because it is living out the Gospel message of love.
- There may be local diocesan newspapers that the church uses to help people learn more about their faith, such as the Catholic Pictorial in Liverpool or the Westminster Record in Westminster.

## Nationally

- On a national level, the Bishops' Conference of a country helps Catholics to know and share the Gospel
- In 2015, a national evangelisation initiative called 'Proclaim' 15: building missionary parishes' was introduced by the Church by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, leader of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. It was designed to acknowledge all the good work that is already being done by the Catholic community, and to provide resources to develop new expressions of Catholic missionary outreach.
- There may be national Catholic publications used by the Church to help evangelise such as *The Universe*, *The Tablets*, *The Catholic Herald* and *The Catholic Times*.

## Globally

- The Catholic Church is a global presence. The Vatican has a specific department that focuses on evangelisation called *the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples*. The global reach of the Church means it can share the message of the Gospel with the whole world, for example, through the global figure of the Pope (e.g. World Youth Days) and through its own Vatican Radio and TV station.
- - The Church lives out the Gospel in the work of international charities like CAFOD
- -specific organisations exist, such as *Missio*, which is concerned with overseas evangelisation.



*The Parish*

*Other faith communities*

*Social Workers*

*Diocesan Newspapers*



*Proclaim 15*

*The Universe,*



*The Tablets, The Catholic Herald, The*

*Catholic Times*

*Bishop's Conference*

*The Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples*  
**CAFOD**  
*Just one world*  
CAFOD  
*Missio*

# EVANGELISATION Continued...

## Sources of Wisdom and Authority

“Go out and make disciples of all nations...” - Matthew’s Gospel  
Evangelii Gaudium - The Joy of the Gospels



Fewer men  
becoming priests

## Evangelii Gaudium The Joy of the Gospel

In 2013, Pope Francis wrote a letter to the world, called Evangelii Gaudium, which, in Latin, means ‘The Joy of the Gospel’. Its theme is the Church’s mission of evangelisation in the modern world.

**Pope Francis says that the heart of the Christian message is love for one another, which must motivate Christians to share the Gospel, help the poor and work for social justice.**

Catholics must care for ‘the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others.’

Pope Francis says that when God became human as Jesus, he made himself lowly and poor. For this reason, the pope wants **‘a Church which is poor and for the poor’** (EG 198). He wants the Church to have a special love and care for **‘above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked’** (EG 48).

Pope Francis also says that **the parish (the local community) is important in spreading the Church’s message.** As well as a church, many parishes have a Catholic primary and secondary school connected to them. These provide catholic education and help to spread the teachings of Jesus. Parishes should be welcoming places, ready to greet new people and receive them into the community. The Pope says that **Catholics should be outward looking; this means they should look for new ways to spread the Gospel message.**

## Church attendance is on the decline



The UK is a multi-faith society in which people of different religions, and no religion, live alongside each other. According to the 2011 census, the profile of religious belief in Britain has changed considerably since 2001. Half of the people questioned still consider themselves as Christian, but Britain is now a place which has an increasingly diverse pattern of religious and nonreligious beliefs and practices.

This diversity brings benefits and challenges in evangelising in Britain. Although Christianity is still the largest religion, church attendance is on the decline. This means that churches have had to close, making it less easy for the Gospel to be spread. There are now fewer men becoming priests and existing priests are getting older. In the past, parishes might have two or more priests. Now priests have to serve several parishes, making celebration of the sacrament more difficult.

Catholics are much more likely to come into contact with people from different faiths backgrounds than ever before. The Catholic Church teaches that people of other faiths should be respected and Catholics should be sensitive to those who have no religious beliefs yet still seek to do good. Catholics should try to respect different and work in unity showing common values such as respect, tolerance, charity and non-violence.



**2011 Census: Half of the population consider themselves Christian**

## The role of religion in education

Today, about one third of state-funded schools in England and Wales are faith schools. This means that, although the bulk of their income comes from public funds, these schools have a ‘religious character’.

Of the 7,000 primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, 98% have a Christian character: 68% of Church of England schools and 30% are Catholic.

All pupils must, by law, be taught religious education and all schools should provide a daily act of worship. Religious education should reflect the fact that the traditions of the UK are, in the main, Christian. For state schools without a religious character, more than half of the acts of worship should be Christian. However, many schools celebrate a variety of religious traditions throughout the school year.

**98% Christian  
Character**

**68% Church of England**

**30% Roman Catholic**

## Evangelising in Britain

## Knowledge Check



1. What does it mean to be a multi-faith society?
2. According to which census did half of those questioned consider themselves Christian?
3. What has made the celebration of the sacrament more difficult?
4. Which Pope wrote a letter to the world named “The Joy of the Gospel”?
5. What is this translated in Latin?
6. In this letter, Pope Francis says that when God became human as Jesus, he made himself lowly and poor. What does he therefore call the Church to do?
7. What does it mean for the Church to be ‘outward looking’?
8. Of the 7,000 primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, what percentage have a Christian character?

## Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question

*c) Explain the possible benefits and challenges of Catholic mission and evangelisation in Great Britain today [8].*

*In your response you must reference to the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian and also diverse.*

## Summary

- The mission of the Church is to go out into the world and spread the Gospel
- The 2013 letter by Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, deals with evangelisation. It is all Christians’ responsibility to preach the Gospel by loving one another, helping the poor and working for social justice
- Britain is a multi-faith society which brings benefits and challenges for evangelism
- UK law and culture is rooted in Christian tradition. However, the influence of other faiths and those have no faith has increased



# UK LAWS, FESTIVALS AND TRADITIONS



Christianity was introduced to the UK by the **Romans** almost **2000 years ago**. This long history means that **it is deeply embedded in many of the laws, festivals and traditions of the UK**.



In the **16<sup>th</sup> century**, **King Henry VIII** broke away from the Catholic Church and the authority of the Pope and made himself head of the Church of England. Today as well as being head of state, the monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. All monarchs are crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury.



The **Church of England** is the 'established' religion of England. This means that it has links to the government and other official bodies such as the judiciary (the court system).

## Traditions

Many of our customs and ways of life have their foundation in Christianity, for example:

✓ **'Keep holy the Sabbath day'** is a Commandment. Traditionally Christians go to church on a Sunday and it was regarded as a **'day of rest'**. As a result the hours shops can trade on a Sunday are restricted.

✓ In the UK court of law witnesses giving evidence are asked to **swear they are telling the truth**. They often do this **on the Bible**, although if they are from a different religious tradition they can swear on their own holy book or if they are non-religious they can make a 'witness affirmation' where they promised to tell the truth without reference to holy book.

✓ **Christian hymns and readings are often made at public events**, for example the National Service of Remembrance held each year to commemorate those who died in the two World Wars in later conflicts.

✓ Lots of people in the UK mark important life events, like **marriage in a church**, even if they are not religious.



The UK Parliament is the body that makes all UK laws by passing Acts of Parliament.

It is made up of two houses.

**The House of Commons** is made up of elected representative, MPs.

**The House of Lords** is not elected and its members are of two types: Lords temporal are appointed by the monarch, but the Lords spiritual are **26 of the most senior Church of England bishops**.

For laws to be passed they must be approved by both houses of Parliament. **So the Church of England has a direct role in shaping UK law.**

Meetings of both houses of Parliament **open with Christian prayers** and indeed, many of the laws of the UK reflect the teaching of some of the **Ten Commandments**, such as 'Do not kill' and 'Do not steal'.

## Laws



## Festivals



The Christian calendar influences UK public holidays. **The two major Christian festivals,**

**Christmas and Easter, are still widely celebrated in the UK.** School holidays fall over these periods and many businesses will close. All the Christian festivals such as

**St Valentine's Day** are also celebrated, though for most people the religious context of the day is no longer important and it has become a more 'secular' festival, celebrating romantic love.

**As the 2011 census results show, the UK is a place where many religions are practised.** Today people of all the religious traditions may take time off school work to

celebrate their own festivals. For example, the biggest celebration of the Muslim festival Eid al-Fitr happens in Small Heath Park in Birmingham, where 75,000 people gather to celebrate the end of fasting during the month of Ramadan. There are games, entertainment and food stalls and people of all religious traditions (and none) are welcome to come and celebrate.



## Knowledge Check



1. Who introduced Christianity in the UK?
2. When did Henry VIII break away from the Catholic Church?
3. What is the established religion of England?
4. Give three examples of our customs and ways of life that have their foundation in Christianity
5. How does the Church of England have a direct role in shaping UK law?
6. How many Church of England bishops are members of the House of Lords?
7. What are the two major Christian festivals that are widely celebrated in the UK?
8. What non-religious festivals are widely celebrated in the UK?

## Choose a Task



1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

### CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

## Exam Question



*c) Explain the influence of Christianity in the UK today [8]*

## Non-Religious

There are also many other non-religious festival celebrated in the UK. **Bonfire Night** for example remembers the Gunpowder Plot when plotters led by Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up Parliament. Some non-religious festivals, for example the **Notting Hill Carnival** that happens every summer in London, celebrate the diversity of modern Britain with no-specific focus on religion. Non-religious groups, such as humanists, might recognise **World Humanist Day** (in June) or **Human Rights Day** (in December) but these are not widely celebrated in the UK.