

Component 2: Life and Death

Key Concepts

<u>Death</u>	Is the end of physical life. When the physical body ceases completely to function
<u>Eternal Life</u>	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.
<u>Heaven</u>	Is for those who have accepted God's grace and forgiveness in this life; they will enjoy an eternal existence in God's presence in the next life. This face to face encounter with God is what is called Heaven.
<u>Hell</u>	Those who through their own free will ultimately reject God's grace and forgiveness, will have chosen to live forever without God's presence. This total lack of God for all eternity is what we call "Hell."
<u>Judgement</u>	At the end of our life, we will be faced with an ultimate choice to choose God or reject God. The decision we take leads to judgement and decides whether we 'go' to Heaven or Hell.
<u>Magisterium</u>	The teaching authority of the Church, exercised by the bishops in communion with the Pope. The magisterium is given grace by the Holy Spirit to faithfully interpret the Scriptures and Tradition.
<u>Resurrection</u>	The raising of the body to life again after death. Christians believe that Jesus has already experienced resurrection and that all people will experience it at the end of time.
<u>Soul</u>	The eternal part of a human being given at conception which lives on after the death of the body. Also a name for a human being's rational nature- their mind.

Catholic teachings on the meaning of death and dying well

Catholics believe that death is not the end of our existence

Jesus taught that those who believe in him would have eternal life; they would go on to live with God after death.

Many passages in the Bible teach Catholics there is life after death.

“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live even though they die.....” (John 11:25)

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but shall have eternal life” (John 3:16)

This belief should affect the way Catholics live their lives

- It gives meaning and purpose to their lives
- It affects how they should treat those who are dying
- It affects how they approach death themselves

Dying well

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

Respect the value of their life until their natural death ~ This means a **complete rejection of euthanasia and assisted suicide** within Catholic teaching. Instead, Catholics **promote the work of hospices** that provide palliative care when a cure is no longer possible. Hospices help a patient to **maintain dignity through pain relief** and care until the very end of life.

Prepare them to die well ~ This includes allowing them to **spend time with family** and making sure that **they have their financial affairs in order** to reduce worry and stress about inheritance etc.

They may even be encouraged to **plan their funeral** and certainly **to make peace with family and friends** that they have had a grievance with.

For those who are in pain, “*preparing for death*” may also involve **palliative care** (*care that is based on relief of pain and suffering*) which we will look at in more detail later.

Provide rituals to support the grieving ~ This involves **the funeral service which includes imagery and symbols** that reflect belief in hope of eternal life. **Prayers are said** for those who have died and the **belief of eternal life is often explored through music and art.**



Catholic teaching on assisted suicide and euthanasia

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are both ways of ending someone's life before its 'natural end'.

Euthanasia: The term means a 'good' or 'gentle' death. This term is 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.

Assisted suicide: This term is 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 assisted suicide.

The Catholic Church are completely against euthanasia or assisted suicide.

- This teaching is based on the belief that all human life is sacred.
- Life is a gift from God and so should be respected from conception to its natural end.
- Euthanasia go against the sanctity of life and against the instruction in the Ten Commandments – 'Do not murder'.

Instead they would promote the work of hospices and other organisations that provide palliative care (care for those who are terminally ill and their families). When treatment to cure a medical condition is no longer possible.

Palliative Care

Unfortunately, the end of life can be a lengthy time for some people, especially with illnesses such as cancer or MND. It may also involve a lot of pain or discomfort. PALLIATIVE CARE aims to control pain. Medication is given that will help to improve the quality of life and therefore the dignity of the person. Doctors working in hospices are experts in pain control medication.

The Catholic Church AND many other religious / non-religious people support palliative care because it respects the value of the human being until their natural death. In 1995, Pope St John Paul II published a document (Evangelium Vitae ~ Good News of Life) that clearly supported palliative care because:

It allows people to reject treatments that are too painful and difficult

It allows people to feel dignified and that their life still has quality and meaning.



Pendleside Hospice
Hospice Care for Burnley & Pendle

Different views on the quality and sanctity of life

Sanctity of life – Is the principle that life is sacred and should not be ended

Quality of life – is the general well-being of the person, the belief that life must have some benefits to make it worth living.

Sanctity of life

Catholics believe that all human life is sacred and holy. Life is a gift from God; it is precious and should be respected from conception to its natural death.

ALL LIFE IS SACRED

“Thou shall not kill”
Exodus

Palliative care and hospices are a valid alternative to a painful, undignified death



“Life belongs to God from conception until its natural end”
Catechism

“I have knitted you in the womb...you are mine”
Jeremiah

In his letter “Evangelium Vitae” ~ Pope St John Paul II said “I confirm that euthanasia is a grave violation against the law of God”

Quality of life

Some argue that the quality of life is more important than the idea that life belongs to God. If a person is in constant pain they could be seen to have a poor quality of life. Some people would argue that if a person has a poor quality of life they should have a right to die.

**However, there are problems with measuring quality of life as it is very subjective.

Different views on the right to die argument

For the right to die Quality of life arguments	Against the right to die Sanctity of Life arguments
<p>Many think it's a basic human right to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many think it's a basic human right to have control about ending your life. Advances in medicine have led to people being kept alive who would have previously died. These people should have the right to a painless death. Those who believe in free will think it's ethically wrong to keep someone alive who has no hope of recovering. The teaching of Jesus on loving your neighbour can be used to justify assisted suicide, because it might be the most loving thing to do. We do not let animals suffer so why humans? People have a right to refuse medical treatment, so why not a right to ask for Euthanasia. People with terminal illnesses want to control when they die so that they can die with dignity. 	<p>Life is created by God and so it is up to God and not humans when people die.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Euthanasia is legalised the research into terminal illness may be affected. People may want to live but may go through with Euthanasia because they think they are a burden on their family and society. Euthanasia is a slippery slope. Accepting Euthanasia is a slippery slope. It is a short step from voluntary to compulsory euthanasia. The role of doctors is to support life and not destroy it. Would patients trust their doctors? People might change their minds about wanting to die but then it would be too late. Life is special and worthy of protection. All life is special and worthy of protection.

Catholic beliefs about life after death

Resurrection & Life after Death
~ why do Catholics believe it at all?

Because Jesus' **body** rose, not just his spirit, Early Christians also believed all people would also experience Resurrection of the Body. This remains Catholic belief ~ the body will join the soul at the end of the world.

St Paul himself experienced the Risen Jesus and wrote about it to the people of Corinth.

“Christ died for our sins, he was buried, he was raised on the third day and he appeared to Cephas, then to 12. After that he appeared to more than 500 at the same time, some of whom are still alive. Then he appeared to James, the apostles and last of all to me also...”

“ESCHATOLOGY” means “THE STUDY OF ‘LAST THINGS’ ~ DEATH, JUDGEMENT, HEAVEN & HELL

Because ALL FOUR gospels record Jesus' Resurrection and subsequent sightings of the Risen Jesus.

In his letter to the Corinthians, St Paul makes this belief clear...
“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?”



Early Christians believed that soon after the Resurrection would be the end of the world and the Judgement of all peoples (this is called “IMMINENT ESCHATOLOGY”) and scriptures reflect this... “Be on your guard, you don’t know when that time will come”! Gradually they realised that it was not so imminent but that we must spend this life transforming the world to reflect God’s Kingdom.

Catholic belief in resurrection of the body

In 1 Corinthians, Paul teaches that Jesus rose from the dead and that what happened to Jesus will also happen to his followers. Resurrection is the belief that after death people will have a bodily existence. Paul teaches that people will have a resurrection like Jesus and will have a spiritual resurrection given to them by God.

When Jesus rose, his body was familiar but at times his disciples did not recognise him.

Earthly bodies are different to heavenly bodies, according to St Paul...

“The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15)

Remember...Jesus' Risen body was somehow different...it was not recognised immediately!

St Paul believed that the body and soul go together. He believed that somehow, our heavenly spiritual bodies are BOTH body and soul, we do not become “disembodied souls”!



Those who disagree with Catholics ...



- **Some Christians** believe that ONLY the soul will live on. Near Death Experiences may encourage the belief that the body and soul are totally separate (philosophers call this “dualism”).
- **Hindus and Buddhists** also believe in the soul but believe it is placed in a different body after death. This is called Reincarnation. (Some people believe they can remember past lives??)
- **Most atheists** believe there is no soul and life does not continue after death. It is the complete end of a human existence.

ESCHATOLOGY

In Christianity, Eschatology is the study of what happens at the ‘end times’ or the ‘end of the world’. The Catholic Church’s teaching is summarised in the four last things:

- Death
- Judgment
- Heaven
- Hell

Judgment

Catholics believe that when a person dies, God passes judgment on his or her soul. Each person is responsible for their own actions. There will be a final judgment when the whole of creation is judged. This idea is found in the parable of the sheep and goats.

In the gospels, Jesus refers a few times to our judgement in the afterlife...

"This is how my heavenly father will treat you unless you forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart"

([**Parable of the Unforgiving Servant**](#) when the master punishes the wicked servant)

In a story called [**the Rich man and Lazarus**](#), the rich man refuses to help the beggar Lazarus, who eventually dies and goes to heaven. When the rich man dies, he is sent to hell...

"In your lifetime you received good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted and you are in agony".

Heaven

Christians believe that a person who has lived a holy life will be rewarded with eternal happiness in heaven. Heaven is to be at one with God. In the Bible, Heaven is often referred to as a banquet or feast, but Christian ideas about it vary widely. The Bible teaches that there is no pain or sadness in heaven. Christians take this to mean that heaven is a holy, happy and peaceful state of being with God. Christians agree that it is difficult to accurately describe what it is like as we have not experienced it.

Hell

Christianity teaches that Hell is a place reserved for those who are not sorry for the sins they have committed. Hell is often thought of as a place of eternal fire and suffering and eternal separation from God. Many people have a problem with the idea that an all-loving God would allow people to go to hell. However, Christians believe God is just and fair and so cannot let evil go unpunished.

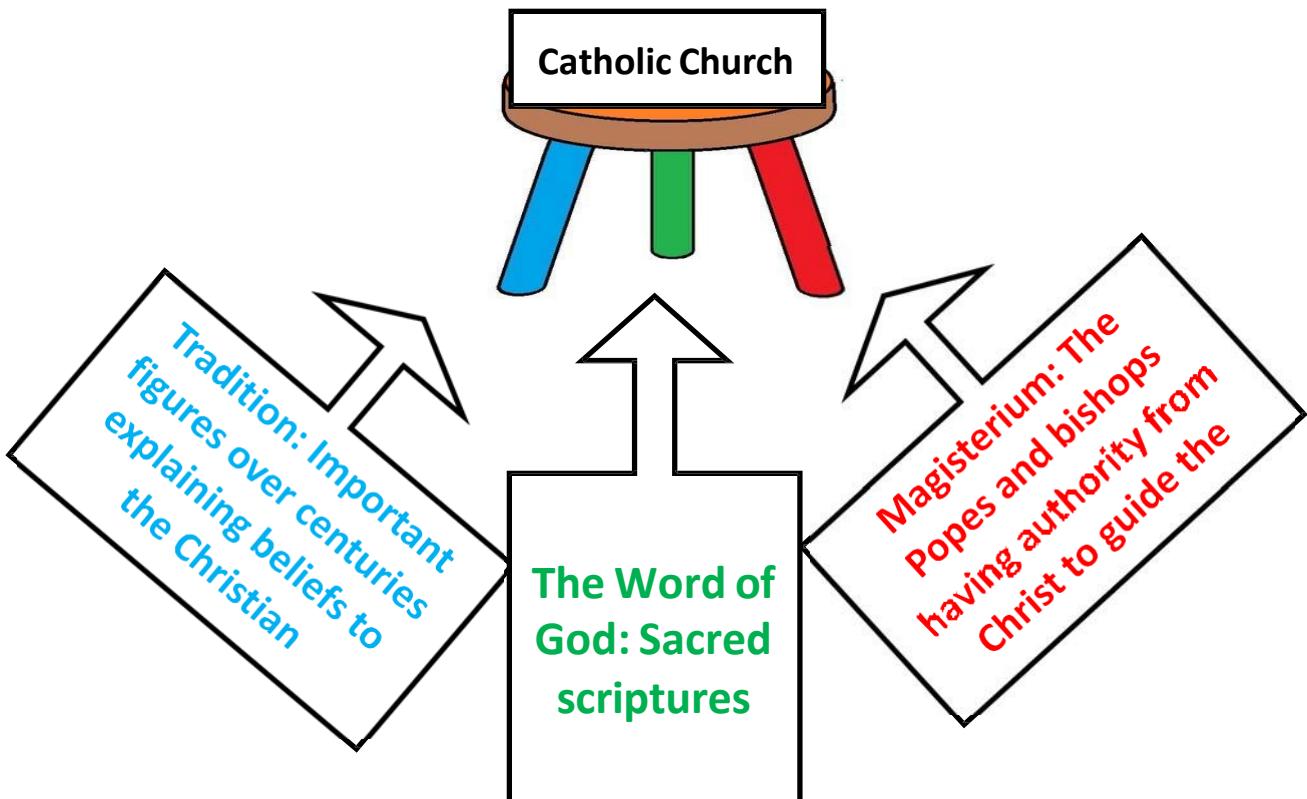
All Christians believe that the world to come will be very different to the life we live now and therefore those who have died need to be prepared for the change. They need to transfer from the sinfulness of this world to the purity of the next. Catholics believe in a state before heaven that is called purgatory.

Purgatory

A state of purifying, a time of cleansing and preparation to enter heaven. St. Paul used the image of fire to represent purgatory – A place of purifying fire. In other words, a place for those people who have died with unforgiven sins to prepare them for heaven. **Protestant Christians do not accept the idea of purgatory.**

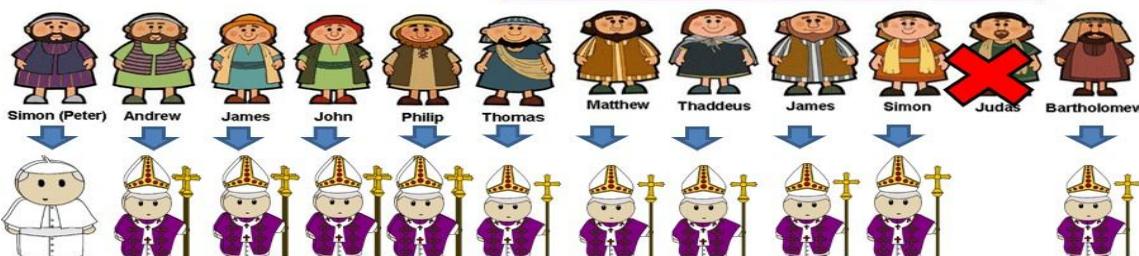
Catholics believe that they can help the souls in purgatory by praying for them. There is a long tradition of praying for the dead. Catholics can ask God for mercy to forgive the Soul's sins so that they can enter heaven.

Where does the authority of the Catholic Church come from?



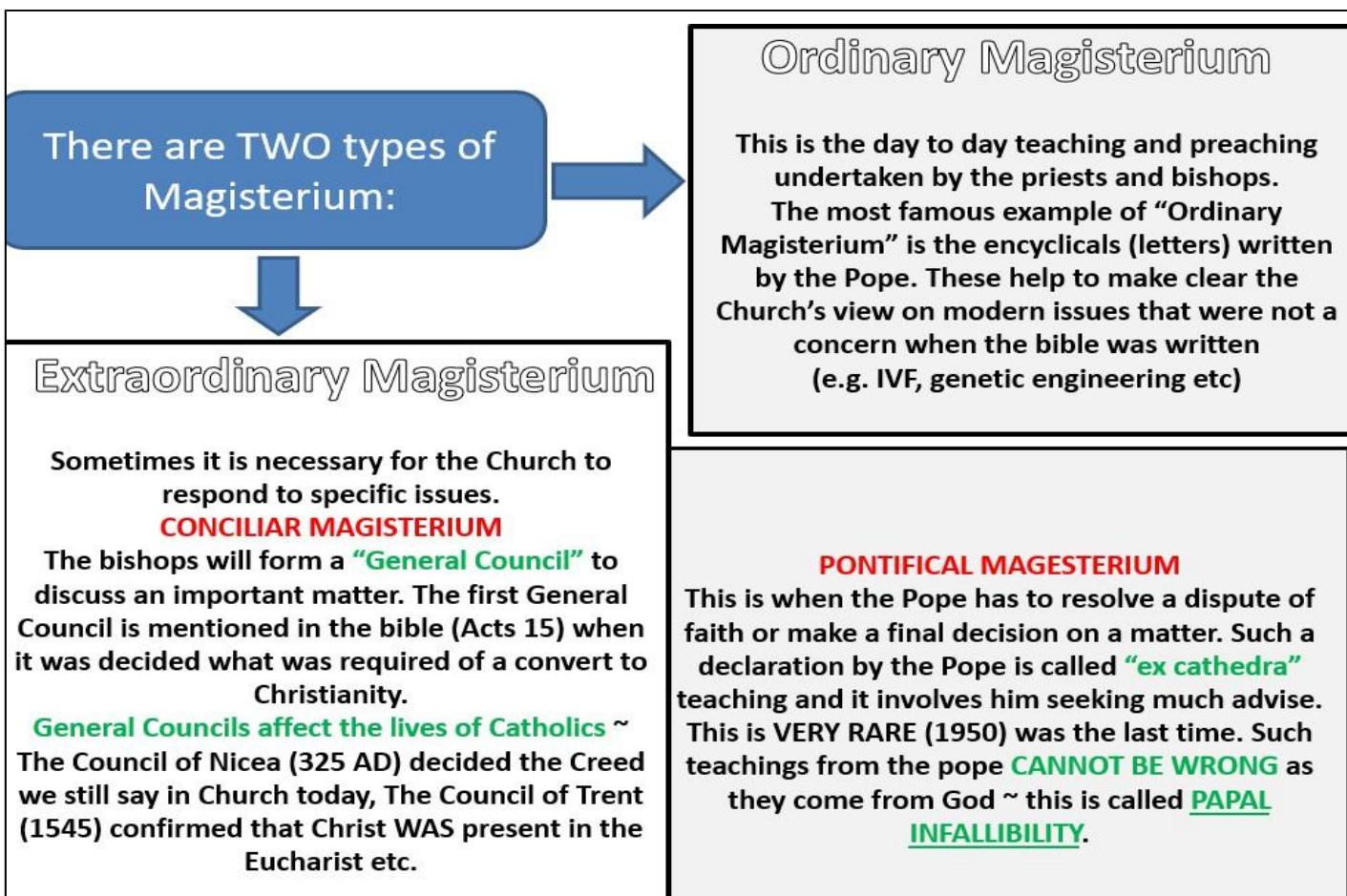
For the exam; the source of authority you need to know about is the Magisterium

- Magisterium comes from the Latin word **“magister”** meaning “master” or “teacher”.
- After he rose from the dead, Christ instructed his Apostles to **“make disciples of all nations”**.
- This is where the authority of priests first came from ~ Jesus himself!
- **All bishops are “descended” from the Apostles** and so they have the same authority from Jesus ~ this is called **APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION**:



It is the responsibility of the Pope and the bishops to make sure that the teachings of Jesus are protected. **They have the authority to make decisions on beliefs about Faith and Moral issues.** The Magisterium can address issues that are not contained within the Bible. Catholics believe that the Holy Spirit guides the Pope and the Bishops in their decisions.

*****Remember – The Magisterium is specific to Catholic Christians, and therefore the teachings from the magisterium will only effect Catholics. *****



The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II)

The most recent General council was in the 1960's. It was known as the 'Second Vatican Council' (Vatican II) because it was the second one to be held at the Vatican, in Rome. It was called by **Pope St John XXIII on 11th October 1962** and completed under **Pope Paul VI on 8 December 1965**.

It is important to know the context of this council. 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 'world'. The Council published sixteen documents.

DEI VERBUM

(Divine Revelation)

MAIN MESSAGE: The importance of being familiar with the bible. It explains how the Bible and Church are inspired by the Holy Spirit. It recommends people study the bible and use it in their prayers. **IMPACT:** More experts in the bible and more bible study groups in churches.

SACROSANCTUM CONCILIIUM

(Sacred Liturgy)

MAIN MESSAGE: Every Mass used to be said in Latin and the priest faced the altar (and away from the people). The Council wanted people to understand what was going on so it changed to local language and the priest faced the people. **IMPACT:** The parishioners are more involved in the service and know what is happening at every stage.

Vatican II ~ The Four Key Documents

LUMEN GENTIUM

(Church)

MAIN MESSAGE: The Church emphasised that the ordinary people of the Church were as important as the priests and bishops. Ordinary people were encouraged to participate in the Mass.

IMPACT: People reading, doing the offertory and ministers of the Eucharist etc.

GAUDIUM ET SPES

(Modern World)

MAIN MESSAGE: Encouraged people to engage with the world ~ in poverty work, technology and science. Wanted the Church to be a source of "joy & hope" to the world.

IMPACT: Huge impact! CAFOD was established. Parishes have charity groups and Peace groups. Also the CARJ was established (Catholic Association for Racial Justice)

Changes brought about by Vatican II

Before the Council	After Vatican II
Mass was said in Latin	Mass was now said in the local language, so people could understand what was being said.
The priest and congregation faced the altar to show the link between the Eucharist and Jesus' sacrifice	The altar turned around and the priest faces the people, so everyone can see. This encourages a sense of community and participation
The priest leads everything	Lay people are encouraged to read in Mass and be Eucharistic Ministers. More women get involved.
The congregation only receive communion in the form of bread	Communion under both bread and wine are encouraged.
Bible readings did not play a big part in the lives of many Catholics.	More emphasis on Bible readings. Catholics are now encouraged to read scripture.
Catholics were encouraged to see themselves as different from other Christians and not to mix with them. Catholics were not allowed to go to protestant Churches.	A focus was placed on what all Christians have in common rather than what divided them.
Catholics were closed off to other religions and cautious of world views.	Open to dialogue with people of other Faiths especially Judaism.

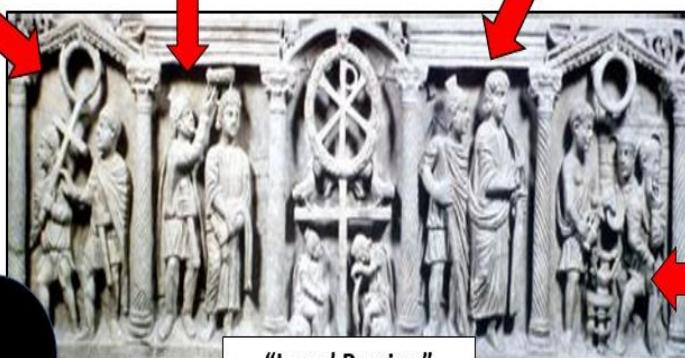
Artefacts

- Artefacts are objects made by humans.
- Some artefacts within the Christian Church deliberately portray Christian beliefs about things such as eternal life.
- We are going to study one particular artefact called a SARCOPHAGUS.
- A sarcophagus is a stone coffin with carved images on it ~ often featuring scenes from the bible
- The sarcophagus you need to know is called JESUS' PASSION (Jesus' Passion means the events of the last period of Jesus' life, ending with his crucifixion ~ "Passion" means "suffering" in Latin)

This panel shows Simon of Cyrene being instructed to carry Jesus' cross by the Romans:

This next panel shows Jesus being given the crown of thorns ~ this was a mockery of Jesus but has come to be seen as a crown of victory by Christians because his death triumphed over sin:

This panel depicts the time that Jesus was presented to Pontius Pilate for trial (he was the Roman Governor)...



Finally, in the centre is the Christian CHI-RHO symbol ~ this represents Christ and is an ancient symbol of the

Resurrection. It is made up of the first two Greek letters of the word CHRIST;

Chi = X

Rho = P

"Jesus' Passion"
Sarcophagus
(Museo Pio Cristiano,
Vatican)

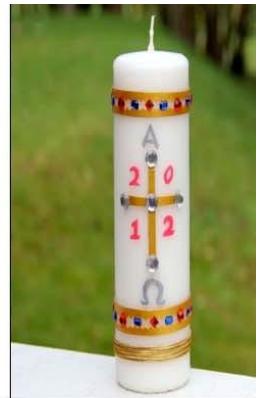
It is wrapped in a wreath (Roman symbol of victory) and placed in the beaks of two eagles (representing God as Eagles were a symbol of the Roman god Jupiter)

... which links to the panel next to it where Pilate, who saw no reason to execute Jesus, gave in to the pressure of the crowd. He washes his hands as a symbol that he takes no responsibility for the execution.

Despite the horrendous suffering of the Passion, Jesus death was ultimately a victory for Christians because it overcame sin and through the Resurrection, gave us the hope of eternal life with God

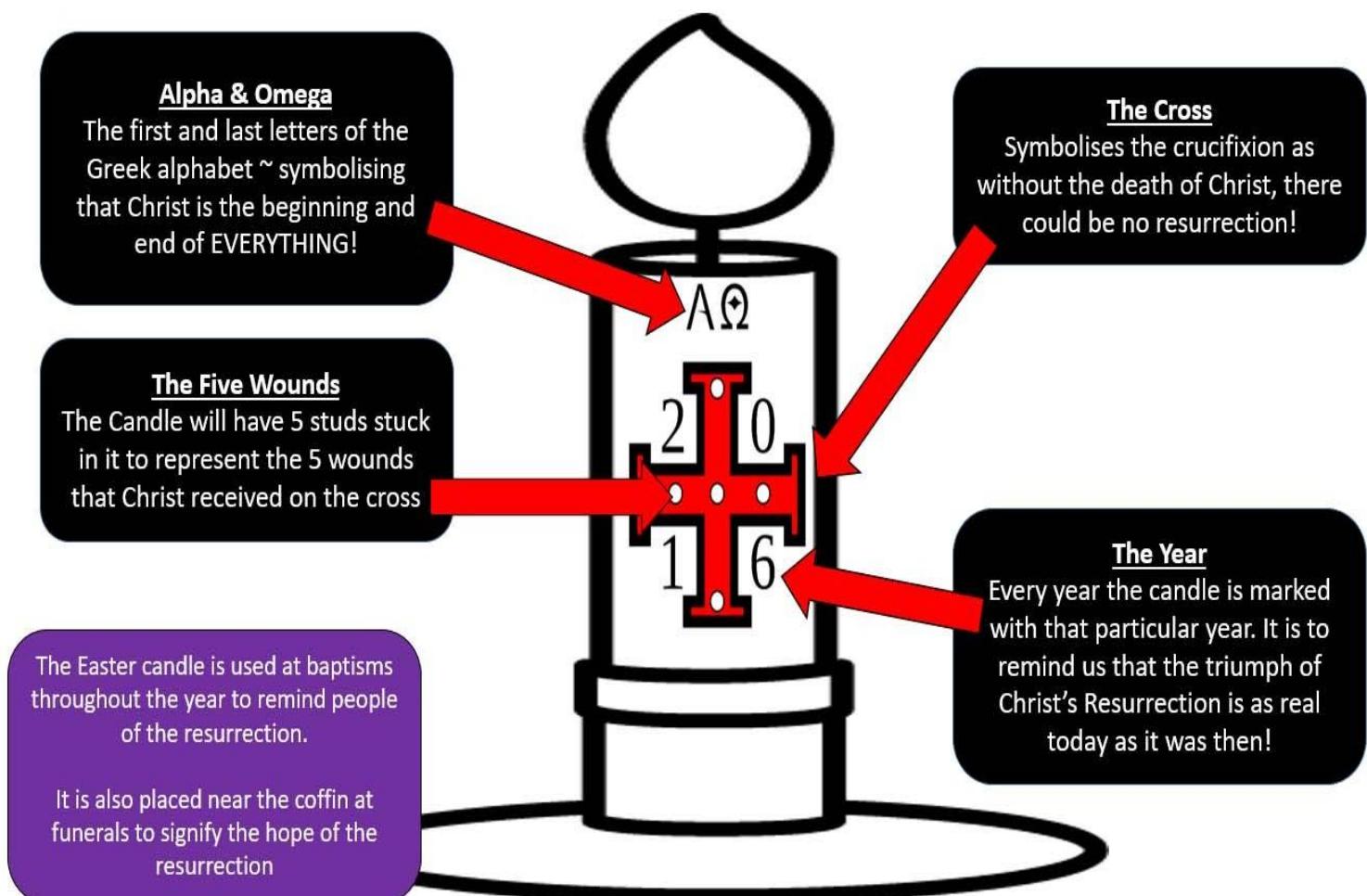
What is the Paschal candle?

- It is a special candle used particularly during the Easter Vigil and the Catholic Baptism
- It symbolises the Resurrection of Christ



How is it used in the Easter vigil?

- At the beginning of the Easter Vigil, the Church is in darkness.
- The Paschal Candle is lit at the back of the church and processed through.
- This symbolises Christ “The Light of the World” conquering the “darkness of sin”.
- The Paschal Candle has a number of symbols on it to reinforce Catholic belief in Jesus’ triumph over sin.
- It is placed in a prominent place in church and lit every Sunday from Easter to Pentecost as a reminder of Jesus’ triumph over sin!



Music in the Catholic mass:



ALLELUIA:

This is a chant for welcoming the Gospel. The congregation stand and sing the alleluia as a way of acknowledging the importance of the teachings of Jesus.

EUCARISTIC ACCLAMATIONS:

In preparing to receive the Body of Christ, the congregation sing the “Holy, Holy” and the “Lamb of God”. It is believed singing (either in ancient Latin or in a modern way), highlights the importance and significance of the Eucharist for Catholics.

THE GLORIA:

This is a great song of praise for God, said towards the beginning of Mass. It is sung with great joy!

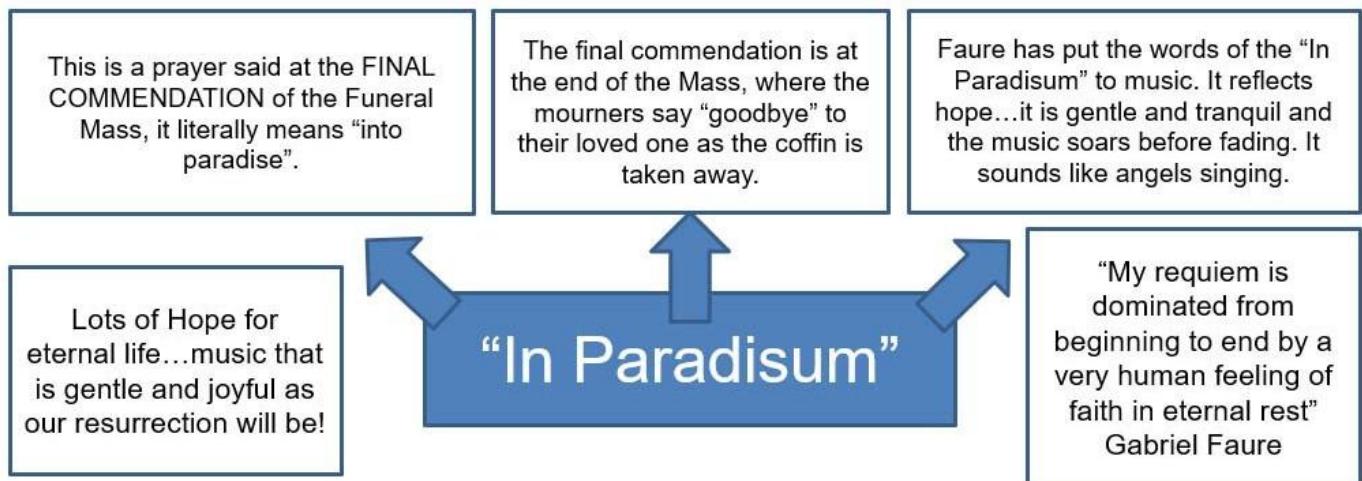
HYMNS:

Hymns can be sung throughout the Mass and may be ancient, traditional or modern. They can support quiet prayer and can be used loudly with great joy! They often accompany the procession of bread and wine to the altar.

How music expresses Catholic beliefs about eternal life: Faure's Requiem

Faure's “Requiem”:

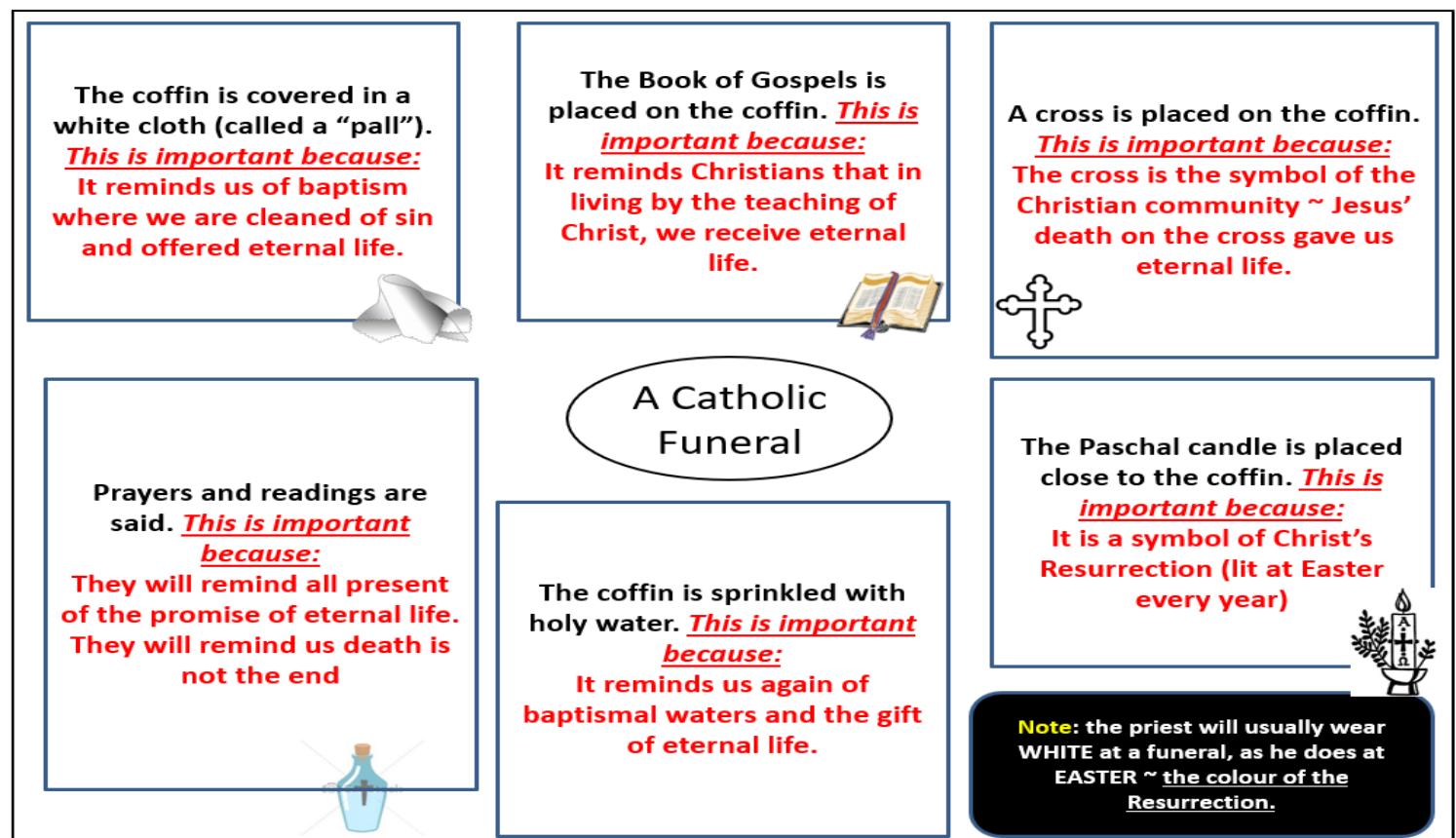
- A “**requiem**” is a mass for a funeral. Many composer's have written beautiful “Requiems”.
- The word “**Requiem**” comes from the **Latin for “rest”**.
- **Gabriel Faure** (1845-1924) wrote his after the death of his Father.
- He wanted to show through music that you can be **sad about death while still having great hope and joy about eternal life!**
- The **beginning is solemn** ~ reflecting the **sadness of death**.
- Then it becomes **uplifting**, using **soprano (high) angelic voices, harps and violins** to reflect the **joy of resurrection!**



"May the angels lead you into paradise; may the martyrs receive you at your arrival and lead you to the holy city Jerusalem. May choirs of angels receive you and may you have eternal rest."

The Catholic Funeral Rite

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 and 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.



Prayer within Catholic communities

Prayer is the central way that believers use to communicate with God. The CCC defines it as “raising the heart and mind to God.” It can take many different forms ~ it can be silent, or out loud ~ it can be formal and written down or spontaneous, off the top of your head! Prayer is a way of bringing us closer to God and improving and deepening our relationship with Him.



Why do Catholics pray?

THANKSGIVING:

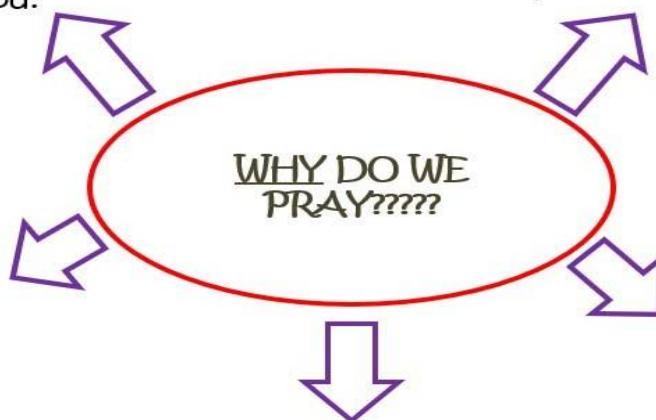
This is a form of prayer expressing a person's personal thanks to God. The word “Eucharist” means thanksgiving and is the greatest act of thanks to God.

PETITION (Help for self):

This is when we ask God for something ~ for a personal intention

ADORATION:

This means praising God for his greatness and power! The sign of the Cross is a prayer of adoration. Sometimes the Blessed sacrament is also put on display as we pray



REPENTANCE:

Sometimes we need to express our sorrow and regret to God for times we have hurt Him or others. We can also seek the sacrament of reconciliation as Catholics.

INTERCESSION (Help for others):

Sometimes we speak to God on behalf of others ~ such as the sick, the bereaved, the poor and the hungry. The bidding prayers in Mass are of this kind

Catholics have a long tradition of praying for the dead – These prayers reflect what we believe happens after we die.

- They ask God to welcome the deceased into his presence, so they can have eternal life in heaven. The most common prayer is the ‘Eternal Rest’
- A Catholic might ask a priest to offer Mass for a relative or friend that has died. The person's name may be mentioned during the Eucharistic prayer.

Prayer usually takes two different forms:

Formulaic Prayers ("set prayers")

Christians often use set prayers in worship ~ following a familiar 'formula' e.g. The hail Mary, The Eternal Rest and the Our Father.

The Rosary is a good example of a catholic formulaic prayer ~ following a familiar, routine pattern.

Priests, nuns and monks also have a set formulaic prayer called "Liturgy of the Hours" ~ said at set times of the day.

Extempore prayers ('random / spontaneous prayer')

Some Christians believe formulaic prayers can be simple routine and not be heartfelt ~ so they use their own words to communicate with God.

Some Christians feel moved by the Holy Spirit in worship and express unusual sounds that are hard to understand ~ this is called "Charismatic prayer" or "speaking in tongues".

The Our Father is an example of formulaic prayer, it is a model for prayer because it includes; Adoration, Thanksgiving, Intercession, Petition and Repentance

The Our Father ~ a formulaic prayer

The word "Father" is **thanksgiving** ~ it is a privilege to call him father ("Abba" means "daddy")

**OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN,
HALLOWED BE THY NAME** 
THY KINGDOM COME, 
**THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN
HEAVEN.**

To call "hallowed" is to call holy. This is **adoration!**

Petition: we are asking for our daily needs to be met.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD; 
AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS
AGAINST US
AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION,
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL...

Intercession: Christians are asking for life on Earth to be made as fabulous as life in God's presence (peace, equality etc)!

Repentance: we acknowledge we will often fall short of perfection!

