

Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish
Religious Education Office
203 East Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06855
Tel: (203) 866 1189
<http://stthomasnorwalk.com>

Lesson nr. 3 and 4 – Tuesday, Oct 20, 2020. – HANDOUT 2

In addition to the Sacred Scripture in our Catholic Church, we use another book that we call: Catechism of the Catholic Church (Abbreviated: CCC). A dictionary definition of such catechism might go as: “A BOOK that explains the beliefs of the Catholic faith by using a list of questions and answers in a very organized, systematic way”.

- For us Catholics, the **BIBLE**, the **TRADITION** of the Church and the **INTERPRETATION** of these by the **MAGISTERIUM** forms the complete resource to fully (or better) understand and attain to God’s **REVELATION** to humanity.
- The very word **CATECHISM** comes to us (yet again) from the Greek language, where the word **KATECHEO** means: **To teach orally, verbally**, and from the beginning of Christianity such summaries, compendiums, or **MANUALS** served the faithful to better grasp the **DOCTRINE** – or in other words – all the **ARTICLES OF FAITH**.
- Therefore, following the German (**LUTHERAN**) Reformation in the 16th Century, the Catholic Church made sure that each local Catholic Church – in other words – each **ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE** – consisting of numerous Dioceses – like our Diocese of Bridgeport in CT – that each such province would have taught and distributed a **MANUAL** for the Catholic Faith and the term used to describe such a **MANUAL** is **CATECHISM**.

Standard **CATECHISM** in America – from 1885 to early 1960s was the so called **BALTIMORE CATECHISM** – and most likely your grandparents learn their religion from that catechism. It was a **MANUAL** (compendium, catechism,) that was often taught by rote (most of the catechism your grandma and grandpa had to learn by heart) where each edition of the **BALTIMORE CATECHISM** would have a series of **QUESTIONS** with their answers. It was based on [Robert Bellarmine](#)'s 1614 Small Catechism.

- Let's try it from the printout:

The current **CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** (**abbreviated to CCC**) is the first systematic **SYNTHESIS** (compendium) of our Catholic **FAITH** issued since the **MIDDLE AGES** – namely – since the Council of Trent in 1566. It has been **PROMULGATED** in 1992 and **PUBLISHED** on September 8, 1997 by Pope now Saint John Paul II.

The Catechism is arranged in four principal parts:

- The Profession of Faith (the Apostle's Creed)
- The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (the Sacred Liturgy, and especially the **SACRAMENTS**)
- Life in Christ (including the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**)
- Christian Prayer (including **THE LORD'S PRAYER**)

This scheme is often referred to as the “Four Pillars” of the Faith.

The contents are abundantly footnoted with references to sources of the teachings, in particular the **Scriptures, the Church Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils and other authoritative Catholic statements**, principally those issued by recent popes.

More like the **BIBLE** (that goes by the Title of each Book, Chapter and verse number instead of page numbers) the CCC also, instead by the page number, it goes by so called **PARAGRAPH – Particular NUMBER** in front of an **ARTICLE**, organized into sections of chapters and parts.

Let's try some: