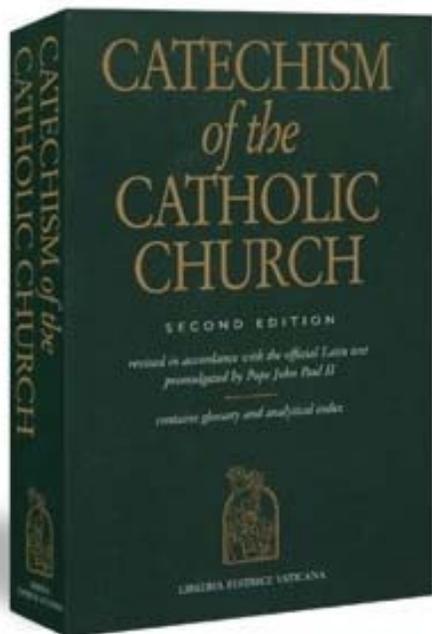


Catholic Toolbox: *How to Use the Catechism of the Catholic Church*

“The Church now has at her disposal this **new, authoritative exposition of the one and perennial apostolic faith**, and it will serve as a ‘valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion’ and as a ‘sure norm for teaching the faith,’ as well as a ‘sure and authentic reference text” for preparing local catechisms’ (cf. Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*, no. 4). Catechesis will find in this genuine, systematic presentation of the faith and of Catholic doctrine a **totally reliable way to present, with renewed fervor, each and every part of the Christian message to the people of our time.**”

- St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter approving and promulgating the Latin Typical Edition of the Catechism of the Catholic Church



Some Beginning Questions

What is a “Catechism”?

A Catechism is a text which collects the truths of the Faith into one coherent whole so that the Faithful may see those Truths and the relations between them and may be taught their Faith systematically.

What is the “Catechism of the Catholic Church”?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is the second catechism produced and approved for use by the entire Catholic Church.

When did the Catechism of the Catholic Church come out?

The realization of the need for the Catechism grew from some of the ideas expressed in the Second Vatican Council. This impulse was expressed more clearly in the 1985 Synod of Bishops. The first edition of the Catechism came out in 1992, and the official Latin edition came out in 1997.

Major Parts of the Catechism

Part One: The Profession of Faith (§§26-1065)

Major Question: What do we believe?

Major Topic: **The Creed** (§§185-1065)

Part Two: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (§§1066-1690)

Major Question: How do we come into contact with God in the Sacraments?

Major Topic: **The Seven Sacraments** (§§1210-1666)

Part Three: Life in Christ (§§1691-2557)

Major Question: How do we live the Faith?

Major Topic: **The Ten Commandments** (§§2052-2557)

Part Four: Christian Prayer (§§2558-2865)

Major Question: How do we pray?

Major Topic: **The Lord’s Prayer** (§§2759-2865)

Tools

The following is a list of the tools that are built into the Catechism to help you get more out of it:

- **Paragraph numbers**—the same no matter which language or printing
- **“In Brief” sections**—summarizing some of the main points of each section
- **Table of contents**—in the front of the book; includes the section headings to aid in finding and seeing the relationships between topics—refers to the *page number* where you can find the section
- **Footnotes**—found at the bottom of the page; help you to find the sources of these ideas in Scripture and other important documents and show where you can go to read more about the topics
- **Cross-references**—found in the margins of the text; point to other paragraphs in the Catechism where the same idea or phrase is used
- **Index of Citations**—found in the back of some printings; lists the paragraphs of the Catechism that use different verses of Scripture, Church documents, or important Christian thinkers
- **Index**—found in the back of the Catechism; helps you to find different topics in the Catechism—refers to the *paragraph number* where you can find the topic
- **Abbreviation list**—found in the back of the Catechism; a list of the abbreviations used in the Catechism to refer to books of the Bible and to commonly referenced Church documents
- **Glossary**—found in the back of the Catechism; definitions of many of the important terms used in the Catechism

Starting with paragraph 782, use the cross references in the margins to find out more about the relationships between the Truths of the faith. As you go, note each paragraph you go to and a main point from that paragraph. Try to hit each of the 4 major sections of the Catechism if you can!

1. §782 A main point:

2. §_____ Main point:

3. §_____ Main point:

4. §_____ Main point:

5. §_____ Main point:

Practice

1. What is the first phrase defining “Prayer” in the glossary?
2. 1 John 4:8 says “God is love.” Which paragraphs in the Catechism refer to this verse?
3. Which paragraphs of the Catechism speak about Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem?
4. How many main sections are there to the part of the Catechism that focuses on the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick?