



Catechetical Series:

What Catholics Believe & Why

HOW CATHOLIC LITURGICAL PRACTICES LEAD US TO JESUS CHRIST

Behold The Truth

Discovering the What & Why of the Catholic Faith
beholdthetruth.com

“The liturgy of the Church presupposes, integrates and sanctifies elements from creation and human culture, conferring on them the dignity of signs of grace, of the new creation in Jesus Christ.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, par. 1149



The Incarnation: The Foundation of the Faith

- ❖ “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” John 1:1, 14
- ❖ The Catholic faith rests upon the truth of the Incarnation: the event by which the invisible God become visible, spirit became flesh, in Jesus Christ.
- ❖ We believe that Jesus is at once true God and true man.



The Sacraments: Personal Encounters with Christ

- ❖ The Church's belief in the Incarnation is manifest in her Sacraments.
- ❖ The Sacraments are sacred signs given to us by Christ, in which divine grace, which cannot be perceived with the senses, is imparted through sensible things, such as water, oil, bread and wine.
- ❖ These sacred rites, which give material form to the immaterial, are extensions of the Incarnation.
- ❖ As such, they are real personal encounters with the Lord.



The Sacraments: Personal Encounters with Christ

- ❖ This is especially true of the Holy Eucharist, the Blessed Sacrament.
- ❖ At the moment of the priest's consecration at Mass, what was ordinary bread and wine is mystically transformed into the living Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ.
- ❖ Outwardly, it still appears and tastes like bread and wine, yet its very substance has been changed, so that the outer serves as a sign of the inner reality.



The Sacraments: Personal Encounters with Christ

- ❖ Bread symbolizes nourishment and sustenance, and wine joy.
- ❖ In Holy Communion our souls are fortified with divine life and inebriated by the presence of the Beloved.
- ❖ Above all, the Eucharist and all the Sacraments affirm that Christ really did come in the flesh; and His coming has bestowed upon our human nature a dignity that is beyond reason.



The Holy Mass: Calvary In Our Midst

- ❖ At Mass, God, who is outside of time, makes the death of Jesus present to the assembly in an unbloody manner.
- ❖ In this way, He gives the Church in every age the means of participating in and offering the sacrifice of His Son to Him in praise and thanksgiving.
- ❖ This is the ineffable joy and mystery of the Mass, in which the invisible realities of God's love and mercy become visible to us.

“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not
a participation in the blood of Christ?

The bread that we break, is it not
a participation in the body of Christ?”

First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians 10:16



Christ In the Life of the Church: The Lessons of the Liturgy

- ❖ Everything that the Catholic Church teaches and all of her liturgical practices declare the truth and beauty of God becoming man.
- ❖ For example, her liturgical calendar organizes the year into seasons and feast days based on the life of Christ.
- ❖ In this way the passage of time becomes for us a series of lived faith lessons.



Christ In the Life of the Church: The Lessons of the Liturgy

- ❖ Six months beforehand, the Church celebrates the nativity of Saint John the Baptist, the herald of Christ.
- ❖ This corresponds to the summer solstice, at which time the days begin to grow shorter and darker, harkening back to the Baptist's words, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30



Christ In the Life of the Church: The Lessons of the Liturgy

- ❖ The feast of the Resurrection, or Easter, is likewise preceded by a period of spiritual preparation called Lent.
- ❖ This concludes with the Easter Triduum, which runs from Holy Thursday evening to Easter Sunday and is the climax of the liturgical year.



Christ In the Life of the Church: The Lessons of the Liturgy

- ❖ One of the most prominent symbols used at this time is the Paschal candle, an image of Christ “the light of the world.” John 9:5
- ❖ This candle, ranging in height from three to four feet, is the tallest in the church.
- ❖ Five grains of incense, typically red, are stuck in the candle in the form of a cross to represent Christ’s wounds.



Christ In the Life of the Church: The Lessons of the Liturgy

- ❖ The Paschal candle is lit at the Easter vigil to signify the Resurrection.
- ❖ Traditionally, this is done outside, and in dramatic fashion the candle is processed into the church in total darkness as the congregation sings praises to the Risen Christ.



Catechetical Series:

What Catholics Believe & Why

Produced by

Behold The Truth

Discovering the What & Why of the Catholic Faith

visit us at

beholdthetruth.com